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PM makes surprise visit to Oman

ALON PINKAS

PRIME Minister Yitzhak Rabin yesterday made an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman that was kept secret until it ended.

The Prime Minister's Office last night confirmed Rabin flew to Oman yesterday morning on an air force plane. His was the first public visit by a prime minister to a Gulf Arab state. Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin visited Oman twice this year.

Rabin met with Sultan Qabus Bin Said and the two discussed the Middle East peace process and the tightening of bilateral ties. It has been reported that Israel has had a representative in Muscat for several years.

"You start with a visit and things add up," Government Press Office director Uri Dromi told The Associated Press. "It's a good visit for breaking the ice."

Rabin, who was scheduled to return home early this morning, was accompanied by military aide Maj.-Gen. Danny Yatom, Prime Minister's Office Director-General Shimon Sheves, and bureau chief Eitan Haber. Rabin had asked the Omanis to keep the visit secret.

Elite French unit storms plane, kills hijackers

News agencies
 MARSEILLE

ELITE French commandos yesterday stormed an Air France plane hijacked in Algeria over the weekend, killing all four Islamic terrorist hostage-takers and saving the lives of some 170 passengers and crew.

Three crew members, including the chief pilot, were wounded, and 13 passengers suffered from shock, bruises, minor cuts, and scratches, according to an Interior Ministry statement.

The terrorists killed four hostages earlier in the hijack, including one at Marseille Airport.

One of the GIGN commandos lost a hand in the attack, Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said.

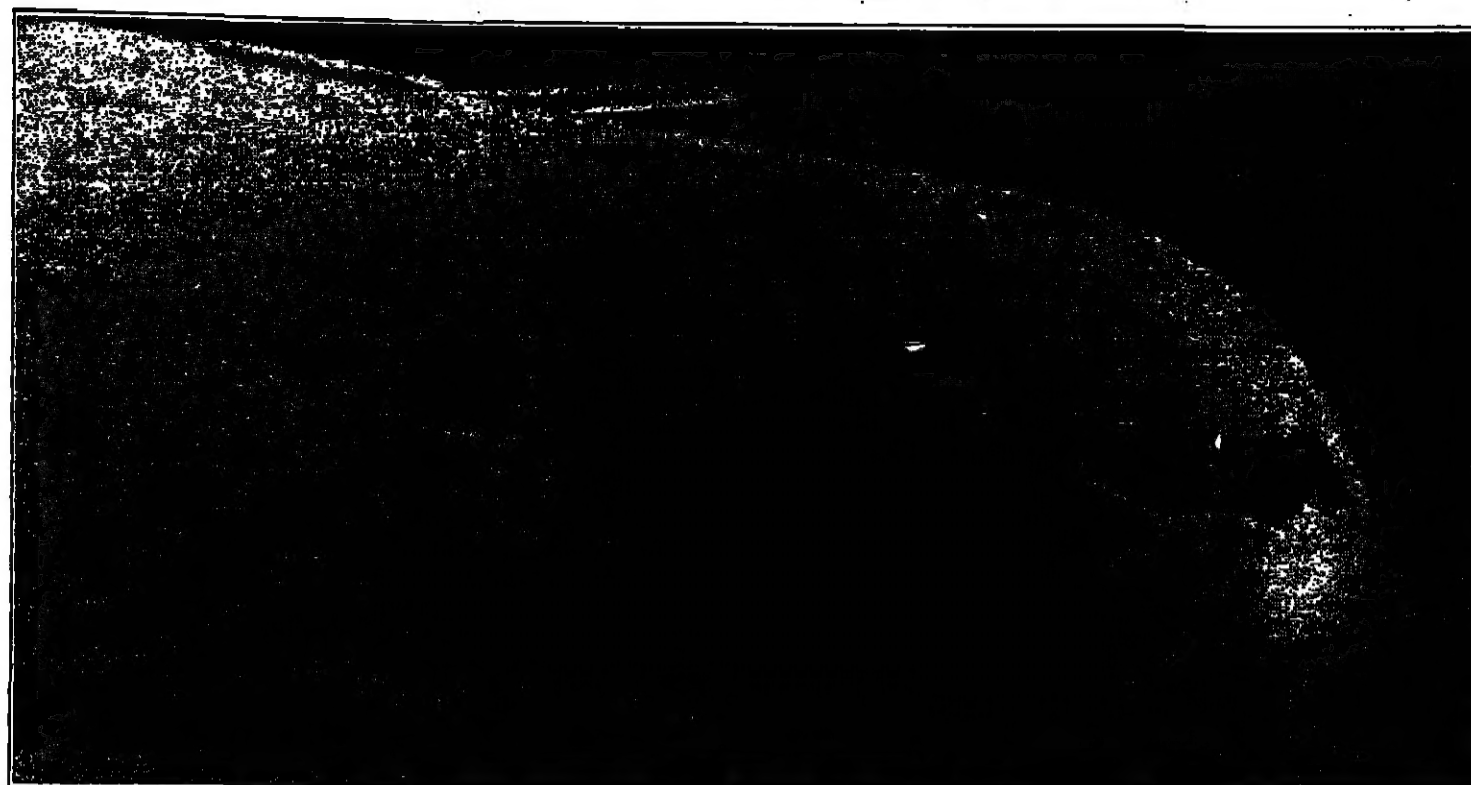
The crack anti-terrorist unit was created after the 1974 Munich Olympic Games massacre of 11 Israeli athletes.

It was not clear if there was a fifth hijacker on the plane, as had been previously reported.

The terrorists, who commandeered the plane on Christmas Eve, fired at the control tower, breaking a window. This apparently set off the assault.

A report the hijackers had killed a fourth hostage could not be immediately confirmed, although someone was seen falling from the plane before the assault.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur told reporters



Members of the French elite GIGN force storm the hijacked Air France Airbus at Marseille Airport yesterday. (AP)

he had ordered the attack "as the only way to safeguard lives."

Most of the hostages were Algerian, but some 40 French nationals were believed aboard.

The terrorists had earlier been identified by Algerian authorities as members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most violent of the Algerian terrorist organizations battling the government.

Balladur said the storming took place "with exemplary courage and efficiency."

LCI television ran a film of the 15-minute attack, showing black-clad and hooded officers entering the plane by the front and rear passenger doors, as well as firing at the plane from the tarmac.

It showed a man believed to be one of the pilots clambering out of a cockpit window and falling to the ground. He got up, clutching one arm, and limped away. Two white flashes were followed by smoke coming from the rear of the jetliner.

A commando, dressed in black, was seen standing on a stairway trying to throw some kind of grenade into the cockpit through a broken window.

He missed, and the device went off on the ground in front of the plane. He then tossed another one into the cockpit through the window, which went off inside. Three more flashes lit up the inside of the cockpit.

Other commandos rushed up staircases on the right side of the plane, pointing weapons inside. A few moments later, inflatable

emergency slides were deployed on both sides and passengers started sliding down and were escorted away with their hands up. Officials said this was for strict identity checks, so no hijackers would slip away in the confusion.

The gunmen seized the Airbus A300 in Algiers Saturday morning, demanding it be refueled so it could fly to Paris. They killed three passengers - an Algerian policeman, a Vietnamese, and a cook at the French Embassy in Algiers - and threw their bodies from the plane.

The 87-member GIGN force has conducted more than 650 operations against terrorists, criminals, deranged people holed up with weapons, and prison riots.

It has successfully mounted operations involving airliners, including a previous one at Marseille Airport in August 1984, when it captured a man who seized an Algeria-bound Air France cargo plane on the ground. It also captured six Iranian hijackers who had taken more than 200 hostages on an Iranian airliner at Paris's Orly Airport in July 1983.

Before last night it had freed about 350 hostages, but lost five men killed in its operations. Perhaps its best-known feat was during the seizure by fundamentalists of the Great Mosque (Kaba) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 1979.

The GIGN advised the Saudi authorities to end the week-long siege by flooding the cellars where the gunmen were holed up.

Long school day amendment threatens to bust budget

EVELYN GORDON

A SEVERAL-hundred million shekel threat loomed over the budget in the form of the long school day yesterday, as the Knesset began its marathon debate on the budget and the accompanying economic arrangements bill.

Meanwhile, Arab MKs are threatening to vote against the budget unless their demands are met.

The debate on the economic arrangements bill is scheduled to last until tomorrow, though many MKs will take the opportunity to talk about the budget as well. The budget debate itself, which by law is limited to six hours, will take place on Thursday.

The long school day amendment, which would extend the school day until 4 p.m. in development towns for the 1995/96 school year, and throughout the country the following year, was originally proposed by MK Meir Sheerit (Likud).

However, when Labor faction chairman Eli Dayan decided that the law had a good chance of passing, thanks to strong support

from Shas and the entire opposition, he decided to introduce his own amendment on the subject, together with Rafi Edri (Labor), so that, in his own words, Labor would at least get the political credit.

Edri estimated the law would cost NIS 180-190 million the first year and NIS 570m. the following year.

Of the thousands of amendments proposed to the budget and the economic arrangements bill, this so far seems the most likely to pass, since numerous MKs from Labor's social welfare caucus have also come out in support of it.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat strenuously opposes the idea, as he does all the proposed amendments, saying there is no money for them.

"With a budget [like this one] would be if the amendments passed, it would be impossible to conduct an economic policy," warned Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish, representing

the government, at a stormy meeting of the Labor party faction yesterday.

"It's impossible to do two things as dramatic as the National Health Law and the long school day in one year," added Finance Committee chairman Gedalya Gal.

Meanwhile, Arab MKs are demanding a substantial increase in budgets for the Arab community, though they have not specified an amount. They also want the purchase tax on agricultural lands in the Arab sector cancelled. If their demands are not met, they said, they are prepared to vote against the budget, even if the vote is turned into a confidence vote.

The MKs were supposed to meet with Shohat yesterday to discuss these issues, but the meeting was postponed until today or tomorrow.

"The situation doesn't look good," said an aide to Taleb a-Sanaa (DAP) gloomily.

Gal, meanwhile, strongly advised Shohat to stand firm. Labor MKs furious with Shohat, Page 12

Government passes 'Orient House Law'

DAN IZENBERG

THE government yesterday passed a law outlawing PLO political activity in Israel, after defeating a no-confidence motion over the legislation by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the Democratic Arab Party.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal said the new law would enable the government to take action against the establishment of an office at Orient House headed by Saeb Erakat, the Palestinian Authority minister responsible for organizing elections for the Palestinian inter-

im self-governing authority.

The vote on the no-confidence motion was 53 to 3 with 16 abstentions. Twenty-three opposition MKs sat in the plenum, but did not participate in the vote. The bill, known officially as the Gaza/Jericho Agreement Implementation Law (Limiting of Activities) passed its final reading into law by a vote of 56 to 6 with 32 abstentions.

The law is aimed at putting a stop to heightened activity at Orient House and the establishment of institutions belonging to the Palestinian Authority in eastern Jerusalem. It restricts PA activity to Gaza and Jericho and bars any PLO or PA activity "of a political or governmental nature... which does not coincide with respect for Israel's sovereignty" in Israel without government permission.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has (Continued on Page 2)

Showdown expected with Efrat, El Khader residents

HERB KEINON

A SHOWDOWN between Efrat and El Khader residents both claiming the same parcel of land is liable to occur this morning, when bulldozers are scheduled to renew land-clearing work at the site of a planned neighborhood of Efrat.

Residents from both communities, as well as Peace Now activists, vowed to go to the site this morning and variously pledged - depending on their viewpoint - to stop or renew the work.

The civil administration yesterday issued an eviction order against El Khader residents who have encamped at the site, just north of Efrat. According to civil administration spokeswoman Al-ice Shazar, El Khader residents, who have planted trees at the site and remained there last night, are trespassing on state land.

Dozens of residents of El Khader, south of Bethlehem, went to the site last night and vowed to bodily resist any attempts to bulldoze the land. The El Khader Committee representing the villagers issued a statement saying they have "all the legal documents which show our

ownership to this area before the establishment of the State of Israel."

But Efrat Local Council head Yimon Ahiman said bulldozers are set to renew work on the site that was halted after Palestinian demonstrations there last Friday. The work was to have begun on Sunday, Ahiman said, but the extra two days were needed to replace the Arab tractor drivers with Jewish ones.

Shazar said different parcels of the area in question were declared state land in 1983 and again in 1991. According to Ahiman, final government approval to begin work on the site was received in 1993.

Ahiman, who met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin last week, said the construction of the new neighborhood did not come up in the talks. He did say, however, that Rabin and his aides knew about plans to begin construction there.

According to Ahiman, the land was bought for NIS 2 million by a private contractor who is developing the neighborhood, to be called Givat Tamar, without government help.

Meanwhile, Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni said on Israel Radio yesterday that, "What has been done here is thievery, thievery, thievery by force of arms, by force of

Namir offers pension law proposal

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

LABOR and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir yesterday presented her proposal for a national pension law which would increase pension payments for workers' wages by 3.5 percent.

The division of financing between workers and employers will be hammered out by the Treasury, the Histadrut and employers.

Namir and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat are scheduled to meet next week to formulate a joint proposal for the bill.

Shohat is said to be interested in finding a solution to "this very important issue which is of great concern to the public."

According to Namir's bill, all the wage components, including vacation (havra'a), overtime, car expenses and telephone bills, will be pensionable so the workers' pension would increase and their standard of living would not drop drastically upon retirement.

Namir said at a news conference yesterday that at present 500,000 people have no pension insurance whatsoever, and 40% of the 1 million who do receive old age pension get less than NIS 1,000 a month.

"The weaker parts of the population are always less aware of their rights and nobody reaches them to inform them. I find it

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued on Page 2)



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Barak: IDF is hunting and fighting Hizbullah beyond security zone

THE war against Hizbullah is not confined to the security zone and the extremist Shi'ite organization is paying a price, outgoing Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Ehud Barak said yesterday.

He said some operations were being carried out far north of the zone, but could not be made public.

Nevertheless, he ruled out the possibility of a wide-scale IDF operation against Hizbullah, saying the situation in Lebanon was too complex to be solved by military action.

He also rejected the idea of expanding the zone because that would mean having to control another 500,000 Lebanese, which would multiply the problems and ultimately increase the number of victims.

Barak spoke to reporters during a farewell visit to heads of northern towns and villages that was held in Shlomi yesterday.

He was asked about the recent wave of Hizbullah attacks which left six IDF soldiers dead and 18 wounded in a month. During the same period, nine South Lebanese Army soldiers were killed and several wounded.

Barak said the IDF had to be prepared for the possibility that the fight against Hizbullah and other hostile elements in Lebanon would be lengthy and it would be better for it to be fought on the northern perimeter of the zone and even north of it.

"The IDF and the SLA are fighting in the zone. This war is along the border fence, inside the zone, on the perimeter of the zone

DAVID RUDGE

and north of the zone and much, much further beyond the security zone," said Barak.

"Some of it is known to the public and some is confidential. Hizbullah is suffering heavy blows, but we don't hear the howls. They cry to themselves," he said.

"We have to prepare for the possibility that the battle will be lengthy. The aim of the IDF is to ensure that the battle will not be here in Shlomi, nor Zarit nor the northern districts of Nahariya, but along the [northern] border of the security zone and beyond."

Barak stressed that Operation Accountability had ceased automatic Katyusha rocket attacks by Hizbullah on the Galilee in re-

sponse to IDF operations.

It had also illustrated to Hizbullah, the Lebanese and indirectly the Syrians, that Israel was prepared to take and carry out radical steps to prevent northern settlements being hit.

Barak's visit yesterday afternoon came a few hours after Hizbullah attacked an SLA position in the western sector of the zone with mortar fire. There were no casualties and IDF and SLA gunners returned fire.

Reports from Lebanon said IAF helicopter gunships also joined in the attack and came under fire from Hizbullah gunmen on the ground who missed the aircraft.

A top level Hizbullah delegation, headed by the organization's leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, reportedly met on Sunday with

Syrian vice president Abdel-Halim Khaddam. Reports from the region said the situation in south Lebanon was discussed among other matters.

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, IDF medical officers, past and present, met with doctors and staff of the Marjayoun hospital inside the zone yesterday to mark the Christmas holiday.

Dr. Robert Hakim, the administrative director of the hospital, told reporters that the atmosphere among residents of the zone was more tense than previously.

He was asked about reports that some residents were leaving the zone and settling in the north or even abroad for fear of what might happen to them later, in the event of a peace treaty between Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

Search for Hamas activists in capital stepped up

BILL HUTMAN

SECURITY forces yesterday continued the search for Hamas activists operating in Jerusalem and neighboring villages who helped suicide bomber Eymen Radi carry out Sunday's attack in Jerusalem.

Radi clearly spent time in the Jerusalem area before the suicide bombing, and likely received his final instructions and the explosives at a Hamas hideout either in or close to the capital, security sources said.

The sources, however, rejected Hamas claims that the attack showed the group had an advanced intelligence network in Jerusalem, or, as Hamas claimed in a leaflet, that it had targeted a specific bus.

"Everyone knows that the central bus station is crowded in the morning, and that soldiers get lifts to their bases in front of the Jerusalem International Convention Center," one source said.

The license plate number Hamas gave for the bus carrying soldiers it said it had targeted was not the same as that of the bus with soldiers next to where Radi exploded the bomb.

"What we have seen in these recent suicide attacks has nothing to do with improved operations by Hamas," the source said. "The only difference with the past is the fury with which they are acting."

Police brass have openly admitted that beyond improving intelligence on Hamas, there is little that can be done to stop future suicide attacks.

Alex Yitzhakov, 48, and Ra-

shek Abdallah, 43, the two of the 12 people wounded in the attack who remain hospitalized, were reported in stable condition.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for PLO chairman Yasser Arafat said Radi, along with several other Palestinian policemen in Gaza, were already under investigation before the attack for suspected involvement with Islamic militants.

Spokesman Marwan Kanafani said Radi "was on the list to be questioned by the Palestinian security forces."

He said Radi failed to show up for questioning when he was summoned on December 20.

Asked whether the Palestinian authority is planning any arrests in the aftermath of the bombing, Kanafani said: "I do not know, the Palestinian authority is discussing the issue."

Kanafani said the PA will make sure that Palestinian policemen will be "neutral" and not affiliated with other groups.

Alon Pinkas adds: "The IDF yesterday denied that terrorists are using tunnels leading from the Gaza Strip to Israel."

An IDF spokesman's Office statement said that an Israeli Radio news item claiming that Hamas terrorists used a tunnel to cross the Green Line was "erroneous and misleading."

In October, following a PLO claim that such tunnels exist and enable Hamas terrorists to infiltrate Israel, the IDF acknowledged that several tunnels had been dug over the years, and that 11 had been sealed by Israeli and Palestinian forces.

1,000 hassidim pray at Machpela Cave

HERB KEINON

SOME 1,000 Skver Hassidim prayed yesterday at Hebron's Machpela Cave. Hebron settlement leaders are busy trying to strengthen the link between haredim and the cave to make it more difficult for the government to consider withdrawing from the city.

The hassidim, part of a group of some 1,400 hassidim from upstate New York on a visit to the country, traveled to the Gush Etzion Junction from where they were allowed into Hebron in groups of 150 each.

Skverer Rebbe David Twersky stood outside the cave and waited some three hours as his hassidim

filed by to pray. Only 400 Jews and 400 Moslems are allowed in their respective sides of the cave at one time.

"We are working intensively to bring haredim to Hebron and strengthen their already strong links to the city," Hebron settlement head Noam Arnon said.

He said that in the near future a Jewish-owned building directly in front of the cave will be turned into a glatt kosher hostel for haredim.

Arnon said settlement representatives are approaching and being approached by numerous haredi groups, both here and abroad, interested in visiting Hebron.



Police Minister Moshe Shahal, Knesset Interior Committee Chairman Yehoshua Matza, and Jerusalem Police Chief Arye Amit at yesterday's committee meeting. (Eran Hersh)

Meretz threatens to vote against information ministry

DAN IZENBERG

MERETZ MKs yesterday threatened to vote against the creation of a ministry of information coordination when the proposal to appoint Police Minister Moshe Shahal to the new post comes before the Knesset on Thursday.

Without Meretz support, the proposal will lack a majority and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's plans for a cabinet shuffle enabling Yit'ud to join the government will be jeopardized.

Rabin decided to create the new ministry to compensate Shahal for yielding the Energy portfolio to Yit'ud leader Gonen Segev.

MK Avraham Poraz (Meretz) said the "idea of establishing an information ministry is unacceptable in a democratic society. Ministries of propaganda and information are usually found in dictatorships."

Shahal, speaking to the Knesset Interior Committee, said he should be judged by his ideology which is "liberal, open, and concerned with human rights."

He said the information ministry would not deal with propaganda, but inform the public of its rights vis-a-vis the government.

Shahal added that he planned to create a public steering committee to supervise the functioning of

the ministry. It will be headed by Amnon Abramovitz, the veteran *Ma'ariv* columnist who quit the paper a few days ago, after learning his phone had been tapped.

Shahal said that an information ministry poses no threat in a democratic society. Although the US does not have an information ministry, it provides many government services in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, he added.

Shahal also rejected charges that the police and information ministries are incompatible. "The police is not the Inquisition," he said. "I was both police minister and responsible for Channel Two, and you can ask anyone from the media whether I allowed politics to intrude on my conduct."

Shahal also argued that the new ministry did not create new functions but consolidated existing ones, including the Government Press Office, the Government Publications Office, and the Information Center.

Poraz was also angry because the Information Center was taken from a Meretz-run Ministry of Education, without consultation.

High Court petition against Yit'ud withdrawn, Page 12

Otzma volunteer takes bombing in stride

Jerusalem Post Staff and news agencies

A 20-year-old Pittsburgh woman, slightly injured in Sunday's terrorist bombing in Jerusalem, probably will not be scared into coming home, according to family members.

Sara Greenberg, "knew going over there, that there was a risk," said her 49-year-old sister, Naomi. "And she had pretty minor injuries."

Greenberg was sitting in a bus when she "heard an explosion and glass hit me in the back."

"I looked up and there was no glass in the window," she said.

She was released from Jerusalem's Hadassah-University Hos-

pital in Ein Kerem after being treated for cuts on her back.

Greenberg is on Otzma, a year-long program whose participants study Hebrew and volunteer at immigrant absorption centers, experimental agricultural projects, and other areas.

Greenberg has been here since August and is scheduled to stay until June or July. She has just finished working on a kibbutz, where she studied Hebrew.

The bombing occurred as her group was gathering in a parking lot for a trip to the Golan Heights, Shacher said.

Ya'acobi: No meetings between Israelis and Iraqis at UN

ALON PINKAS

ISRAEL'S representatives at the UN have not held any formal or informal meetings with their Iraqi counterparts despite overtures being made, Ambassador Gad Ya'acobi said yesterday.

Ya'acobi, who is home for routine consultations following the annual General Assembly, said he did not have any contact with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz while the latter visited the UN.

"Neither I nor members of the Israeli delegation to the UN had any contacts, ties, discussions, or meetings with Iraqi representatives or with the Iraqi ambassador to the UN," he said.

"[Iraqi representatives] stress on occasion that they do not oppose the peace process nor object to the Israeli-PLO deal," Ya'acobi told a briefing at the Foreign Ministry.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ben-Ya'ir warns newspapers on sub judge
Attorney-General Michael Ben Ya'ir has warned the editors of *Yediot Aharanot* and *Ha'aretz* that he will file criminal charges against them if they continue to publish articles that may influence the outcome of the Aryeh Deri trial. He cited examples from both papers of what he called biased reporting in the case.

Ex-Kach activist's sentence reduced
Jerusalem District Court yesterday overturned the sentence of former Kach activist Tiran Pollack. Earlier in the year, Jerusalem Magistrate's Court had sentenced him to a year in prison, after convicting him on 18 counts of assault, disorderly conduct, illegal assembly, and interfering with a civil servant. Judges Ya'acov Bazak, David Cheskin, and Ruth Or lowered Pollack's sentence to 180 hours of public service. They said they took into consideration that Pollack has cut his ties with Kach, and that two his sisters were killed in a 1983 terrorist attack.

Jenin mayor's bodyguard wounds seven
Seven residents of Jenin were wounded yesterday morning, when a bodyguard opened fire on a merchant who tried to attack the mayor. Six were lightly wounded and taken to the local hospital. The seventh was taken to Ha'emek Hospital in Afula with serious wounds.

Mayor Abdallah Lablouch was meeting with merchants who rent property from the city, when an argument about the amount of the rent broke out and a merchant tried to attack him. Several people, including the bodyguard, were arrested.

Winning cards
In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the king of spades, nine of hearts, king of diamonds, and seven of clubs.



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all the Sephardi communities

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REGINA MEDZINI

beloved mother of their esteemed co-worker
Dr. Meron Medzini
and extend heartfelt condolences to him
and to the entire bereaved family

We regret to announce the passing of
Rabbi NORMAN WOOL זצ"ל

Toronto, Canada
and express our condolences to his family
Wife: Sarale (née Zeltz)
Son: Danny
Granddaughter: Cecily

The staff of Education Matters Ltd.

(Continued from Page 1)

repeatedly said he cannot deal with the increased PLO activity in Jerusalem without the legislation.

"Your excuses are finished now," said Likud Party leader Binyamin Netanyahu after the vote. "Now you have the law you asked for to take action on behalf of a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty." He warned Rabin to act fast, because "Jerusalem is slipping away from us."

Erakat told AP that "Israel is acting as if there was no agreement or mutual recognition between them and the PLO. The feeling and affiliation of Palestinians cannot be stopped by a mere order. With such policies the peace process will be in jeopardy."

Earlier, Shahal told the Knesset Interior Committee the PLO had deviated in several ways from

ORIENT HOUSE

the status quo regarding its activities in Jerusalem since the signing of the Oslo Accords:

● Police activities. The PLO appointed 50 guards at Orient House who, until stopped by police, performed police functions including arresting thieves and taking action against drug offenders and prostitutes. After a series of illegal activities, the police arrested Faisal Hussein's chief bodyguard, Yusef Hawash. "They took the hint and promised to hand over information about offenders to us," said Shahal. "Now they maintain a low profile."

● Preparation for PA elections. Shahal said Erakat and other Palestinian leaders have established an office at Orient House to prepare for the autonomy elections. "The passage of the [Jerusalem]

law will enable us to deal with this," said Shahal.

● Use of Orient House as a meeting place for PA officials. Shahal said Orient House had been the venue of a meeting between the Canadian and PA housing ministers and that such activity must stop. However, Shahal told the committee he would not try to prevent foreign dignitaries from coming to Orient House "for a cup of coffee" and warned against becoming "paranoid."

Jon Immanuel adds: Gush Shalom, the pro-PLO activist group said the "Orient House Law" would go the way of the law barring meetings with the PLO, which was legislated in 1986.

"No law can erase reality, and the reality is that in Jerusalem live two peoples each of which has the right to national expression and to establish the capital of its state."

EFRAT

(Continued from Page 1)

occupation. We have to decide if we want to go toward peace, or we want to go toward unending terror, like another Belfast."

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed-Rabbo was quoted on Israel Radio as saying that the "Peace can go to hell if it comes at the expense of Palestinian land."

Aharon Domb, spokesman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, said in response to Aloni's comments that all the legal docu-

mentation proving that the land belongs to Efrat was sent to Aloni.

In a related development, the High Court of Justice yesterday approved a compromise worked out between the IDF and journalists whereby the press will be allowed to cover events in areas declared closed military zones as long as they do not interfere with the IDF's actions.

The journalists appealed to the court after they were denied entrance to the site near Efrat last week to cover the protest, and a photographer was detained.

PENSION

(Continued from Page 1)

intolerable that some 300,000 self-employed workers and 200,000 employees of the lower-income grades have no pensionary insurance at all and subsist only on National Insurance allocations," she said.

She added that pension costs would increase from 17.5% of workers wages to more than 21%.

Meanwhile, the Fogel Committee has presented Shohat with its own proposal, strongly recommending a voluntary pension system, as opposed to compulsory pension as Namin advocates.

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Invitation to Submit Offers for the Purchase of an Apartment in Gan Ha'ir.

Offers are hereby invited for the purchase of a deluxe apartment in Gan Ha'ir, Ibn Gvirol Street, Tel Aviv. The 250 sq.m. apartment is situated on the tenth floor, faces south and east, and consists of 6 1/2 rooms, a storeroom and parking (an extra parking space may be purchased separately). The apartment block contains a fitness room, swimming pool, sauna and jacuzzi. Entry will be immediate upon transfer of the asking price.

The asking price is US\$ 1,700,000 (one million seven hundred thousand), payable in NIS according to the representative rate. Interested parties are requested to sign a formal order, available at the offices of the undersigned, against payment of NIS 50 (inc. VAT). Signed offers, together with a bank check or bank guarantee for 5 per cent of the offer, must be submitted no later than 1 p.m. on January 20, 1995, at the offices of the undersigned, 5 Beit Hillel Street, 3rd floor, Tel Aviv.

The undersigned, acting on behalf of the owners, is not obligated to accept any offer and reserves the right to enter into negotiations with any of the interested parties or with additional parties at his discretion. No broker's fees will be paid by the seller.

To arrange to view the apartment, or to receive the text of the offer, please phone Miri on 03-5617040.

Doron Shinar, Advocate
Shinar, Shachor, Weissberger
on behalf of the owners

Only 115,000 Jewish children still in ex-USSR

80,000 people made aliya in '94

THE Jewish population of the former Soviet Union is dying. Out of a total Jewish population of 1.3 million, there are only 115,000 children, Jewish Agency Acting Chairman Yehiel Leket said yesterday.

Experts forecast that only 500,000 Jews will remain in the CIS at the turn of the century, he said.

Leket also revealed that, since the former USSR reopened its doors, some 800,000

Jews have left; 538,400 of them have come to Israel. "For every two Jews who come to Israel, another one goes to some other destination in the West," Leket said.

He was speaking at a festive Zionist Executive meeting in Jerusalem marking five years of aliya from the CIS.

Some 300,000 of those Jews re-

maining in the former Soviet Union are expected to make aliya over the next five years, and another 200,000 to go to the West. Because of assimilation and negative population growth, about 500,000 others are expected to be lost to Judaism, Leket said.

The figures are based on a spe-

cial survey conducted by the agency's CIS department.

From the demographic point of view, there is a clear trend towards aging and assimilation, especially in the Slavic and Baltic states, the survey revealed. The rate of mixed marriage is rising sharply, and the birthrate dropping steadily.

In 1988, for example, 73.2% of

Jewish men were married out of the faith and 62.8% of Jewish women had intermarried.

In 1994, 80,000 people made aliya, he said, some 87,000 of them from the CIS, most of them from Moldova and Ukraine. The forecast for the coming year is for a similar number, Leket said.

In the past five years, the Jewish Agency has spent \$1 billion on aliya. Of this, \$830m. were raised by the UJA and Keren Hayesod, he said.

25 Jewish war refugees arrive today from Chechnya

BATSHEVA TSUR

SOME 25 immigrants from Chechnya, including three who fled from Grozny since the fighting broke out, are due to arrive today on a special flight organized by the Jewish Agency.

Another 61 Chechen Jews, who fled to the southern Russian town of Nalchik are staying with relatives or in a local hotel, where the agency has put them up, Jewish Agency Acting Chairman Yehiel Leket said yesterday.

He said that emissaries in the Caucasian towns of Derbent, Makhakhala, Mineralnye Vody, and Pyatigorsk have been instructed to give priority to the refugees from the war zone and are helping to care for them.

Since most of the Jews had left without any identification papers or passports, the emissaries are having difficulty obtaining exit visas, Leket noted.

The refugees are mostly in poor health after escaping overland through the icy Caucasian mountains, the emissaries reported. The agency has provided them with first aid, as well as food, warm clothing, personal items and temporary documents.

Chief rabbis support changing Law of Return

DAN IZENBERG

THE two chief rabbis, Eliahu Bakshi-Doron and Yisrael Meir Lau, yesterday came out in support of a proposal by MK Avraham Ravitz (UTJ) to amend the Law of Return so that non-Jews whose grandparents were Jewish will not be granted immigrant status on the basis of the law.

The Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee held a special meeting at the office of the Chief Rabbinate to discuss the proposal by Ravitz, who intends to present it to the plenum for preliminary reading in the near future.

The proposal calls for the elimination of Paragraph 4b of the law which "has enabled thousands of non-Jews to legally immigrate to Israel," Ravitz

told the committee.

Bakshi-Doron said Ravitz's amendment was the "minimum necessary." He urged adoption of a second amendment according to which the non-Jewish families of converts to Judaism would not be entitled to the privileges of the Law of Return.

The Sephardic chief rabbi said the influx of Christians has had a strong impact on day-to-day life. "Twenty times the number of Christmas trees were sold this year compared with previous years, and the churches are being filled," said Bakshi-Doron.

Meir Lau said the amendment was in the interest of the

secular community as much as the religious and therefore secular leaders should also be speaking out in favor of changing the law.

Committee chairman Emanuel Zissman and Likud MK Ephraim Gur are the only opponents to Ravitz's bill. Zissman warned that any change in the legislation "could create all sorts of tensions and hurt aliya and the attempt to increase the Jewish majority in the country."

Gur said the link between the bill and immigration from the former Soviet Union causes "additional, irreversible damage to the image of the immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States."

Indonesia says Israelis unwelcome

JAKARTA (AP) — Indonesia, the world's largest Moslem nation, yesterday rejected a call to allow Israeli tourists to visit.

"Our position on Israel is not changed. We will continue to deny entry permits to Israeli tourists," Andi Mappassem, director general of the Tourism Ministry, said.

He was reacting to a prominent Moslem scholar's recent comments in local newspaper interviews that Indonesia should consider opening diplomatic ties with Israel now that peace is developing between Israel and the Palestinians.

The scholar, Abdurrahman Wahid, was reelected last week as head of Nahdlatul Ulama, an influential organization of the country's top Islamic scholars.

Wahid said the need for forging ties with Israel was pressing in view of Indonesia's current position as head of the 111-nation Non-Aligned Movement.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Alleged wife killer indicted

Eric Dillard, who allegedly murdered his wife Mali, 28, with a hammer in their home in Kibbutz Mashabei Sadeh on December 16, was indicted in Beersheba District Court yesterday. A hearing on the prosecution's request that the remand of Dillard, 35, be extended until the end of his trial was set for January 12.

Fake policeman robs courier of NIS 197,000

A man disguised as a policeman yesterday robbed a woman delivering her factory's proceeds to the bank. The "officer" ordered Sarah Gilda, who was taking NIS 197,000 from Haifa's Elite plant to a bank in Kiryat Yam, to pull over. He then opened the door, pushed her aside, and jumped behind the wheel of the factory pickup truck and drove off, ordering her to keep her head down. In the suburb of Kiryat Shmuel, the man stopped the truck and fled with the woman's bag, which contained NIS 17,000 in cash and NIS 180,000 in checks.

Jewish Agency executives much traveled

Half of the 18 members of the Jewish Agency Executive were abroad this year for a month or more. The agency spokesman said yesterday that the number of trips had, however, dropped by 15 percent over the past five years. He said that it was now the organization's policy to publish its trips' list. Leading the list were Youth Aliya Department head Shlomo Gravit (61 days) and Acting Chairman Yehiel Leket (50 days).

Namir: 30,000 alcoholics in country

There are about 30,000 alcoholics in the country, but the number of family members affected by them reaches some 100,000, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir said yesterday. She said she would ask the cabinet at its next session to leave the treatment of the spreading plague of alcoholism to the government ministries responsible, and not transfer it to other organizations. Namir told a meeting of ministry officials she hopes to receive a budget supplement that would enable an increase in the number of alcoholics and their families treated from about 900 annually to 4,500.

Deri trial witness accused of giving contradictory testimony

AVRAHAM Hecht's testimony in court contradicted evidence he gave to police, the prosecution claimed yesterday during the trial of former interior minister Aryeh Deri in Jerusalem District Court.

Hecht, a director of the More-shet Binyamin organization that bought lands in Nebi Samwil for harodi housing, was declared a state's witness in exchange for the prosecution agreeing not to file charges against him.

He was later declared a hostile witness, because of the discrepancies between what he said in court and what he had told police. This gave the prosecution more latitude in questioning him.

He told the court yesterday that he gave Moshe Weinberg \$200,000 for his efforts to bring buyers to the organization. He said he had also given Weinberg additional payments.

The prosecution claimed that Hecht's testimony contradicted his testimony to police, whom he told he had paid Weinberg \$200,000 to find a solution to compensate those who had purchased land in Nebi Samwil which was not zoned for the housing.

According to the prosecution, Hecht feared that the buyers would demand their money back, and cause the collapse of More-shet Binyamin if a solution to the problem could not be found.

Also, Hecht told the police that he had given the \$200,000 to the Michtachei Har Shmuel organization, Yeshivat Lev Baran, and to Weinberg, whereas he said in court he had only given the funds to Weinberg. (Itim)



Health Minister Ephraim Sneh (right) and other officials field questions from the public yesterday about the new Health Insurance Law. (Avi Hayon)

Health Ministry's open line leaves thousands without an answer

THOUSANDS of people confused by the new national health insurance system that goes into effect Sunday were disappointed when unable to get an answer from the Health Ministry's open phone line last night.

The ministry's eight lines were boosted to only 12 after queries surged. But most callers were greeted only by a busy signal even after dozens of tries.

Although the Health Ministry spent tens of thousands of shekels trying to explain the

new system to the public through newspaper advertisements on Friday, ministry offices were overwhelmed with queries even before the open line began.

The ministry says that due to demand, it will run similar open lines on Mondays and Tuesdays during the next several weeks.

Only a few days before the new system goes into effect, the National Insurance

Institute has not yet decided how Western immigrant pensioners who have no dealings with the NII will pay their health tax.

Non-working students are not registered with the NII either, but the NII has already decided that initially, they will have to pay NIS 47 per month in quarterly payments directly to the NII, either in person or by a standing order at the bank. When the next university year begins, the tax will be added to tuition fees and transferred collectively to the NII.

El Al passenger tries to stop plane's take off

An elderly woman who boarded an El Al plane bound for London yesterday only realized that her daughter was missing as the plane was taxiing down the runway.

She stood up and asked for the plane to be stopped. The captain contacted the terminal, where El Al said the daughter had missed the plane and would take a later flight. When the woman, 70, said that she did not know how to get to her destination, the captain got directions from the daughter. (Itim)

Health funds to control psychiatric services by June

RESPONSIBILITY for psychiatric services will be transferred from the government to the health funds no later than June, Health Minister Ephraim Sneh announced yesterday.

In a meeting with senior officials in the psychiatric services, it was agreed that psychiatric care will be included in the basket of health services no later than five months after the national health insurance system begins on Sunday.

The health funds will get a year's extension before they are required to open psychiatric outpatient services within a "reasonable distance" from members' homes. The ministry also decided that psychiatric services will continue to be organized on a regional basis. It was also agreed that the insurers will share responsibility in treating members who are substance abusers. No details

were available from ministry spokeswoman Yifat Ben-Hai on how responsibility will be divided.

The chronically ill who are hospitalized for over a year will "continue to be the responsibility of the Health Ministry, which will finance their hospitalization until they recover," she added. But no details were available on how this would be carried out and whether patients would help cover the costs.

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A Beit Jann resident yesterday accepts a heater from 'Jerusalem Post' president and publisher Yehuda Levy (r), as Mayor Yousif Kabalan and 'Post' funds director Beverlee Black look on. The 'Forget Me Not' fund gave 30 heaters to the town's elderly residents.

Olmert pushes for capital beltway

JERUSALEM Mayor Ehud Olmert yesterday continued to push the government to approve the construction of a beltway around the eastern half of the capital.

The government is expected to decide on the project, which includes development in areas over the municipal boundaries in Judea and Samaria, in the coming weeks, according to government sources.

BILL HUTMAN

Olmert yesterday took Justice Minister David Liba'i to an overlook on Mount Scopus and pointed out where the proposed highway would run. The mayor said the road was vital to both easing Jerusalem's traffic problems and strengthening Israel's control of the city.

Liba'i declined to comment on whether he would back the project, which is expected to face strong opposition by the Palestinian Authority because it involves lands in eastern Jerusalem and the territories.

Olmert, however, has vowed to push the government to fund construction for the eastern beltway, and in recent months has lobbied several ministers on the matter.

Meanwhile, Liba'i, touring the city as a guest of City Hall, also visited the Old City, to see first hand new infrastructure work there, and Small Claims Court, which is to undergo major repairs in the coming months.

Fire breaks out in Eilat hotel

RAINE MARCUS and Itim

A FIRE broke out in the lobby and dining room of the Orchidia Hotel in Eilat yesterday afternoon. There were no injuries.

According to the Eilat Fire Chief Dani Bohanda, the fire was caused by a short circuit.

During the summer, 18,605 fires in open spaces were recorded, the Fire and Rescue Commission reported yesterday. Some 75 percent of them were caused by negligence.

The commission has also issued guidelines on how to behave during a fire. If a fire breaks out, phone 102, then try to extinguish it.

If you do not succeed in extinguishing the blaze and live on the ground floor, escape immediately.

If there is a fire in the stairwell, smoke will reach your door before the actual blaze. Under no circumstances should you open your front door. A wet towel should be used to block any cracks where smoke may enter. If necessary, cover your nose and mouth with a damp cloth and open a window.

Secular Jerusalemites to ask court for more protection

BILL HUTMAN

SECULAR residents of northern Jerusalem who were attacked by haredim while driving on Shabbat plan to petition the High Court of Justice to force police to better protect them.

City Councilor Ornan Yekutieli (Meretz), spearheading the fight against the closure of Rehov Bar-Ilan and nearby streets, said the petition would be filed in the next few days.

The residents contend that police have allowed the haredim to shut down streets—particularly Shimon Hatzadik, Yam Suf, and parts of Shmuel Hanavi—that are supposed to remain open on Shabbat.

Meretz plans to lead a demonstration again this Shabbat against the closures, and also intends, as in the past, for activists to break through any haredi roadblocks if the police do not remove them, according to Yekutieli.

The activists will also drive up and down Rehov Bar-Ilan, "to demonstrate our freedom to travel there," Yekutieli said. Mayor Ehud Olmert has accused Meretz of provoking the haredi residents.

The mayor, however, has declined to state his position on future road closings, on the grounds a public committee appointed by the city is investigating the matter.

He has emphasized no roads or places of entertainment have been closed in the capital since he was elected, despite pressure by his haredi coalition partners to do so.

Shabbat unrest at Rehov Bar-Ilan and nearby streets in largely haredi neighborhoods has grown in recent weeks, with over a thousand haredim taking part in the most recent protests last Friday night.

Bosnia cease-fire holds

LIAM McDOWALL
SARAJEVO

A cease-fire held across most of Bosnia yesterday as warring Serbs and Muslims negotiated to broaden the truce, UN officials said.

But Bosnia's president threatened to break the cease-fire unless Serbs stop their allies from attacking government troops in the northwestern enclave of Bihać.

The UN confirmed fighting continued in the Bihać area after the cease-fire went into effect Saturday, but it did not confirm if Bosnian Serbs were involved.

Bosnian Serbs and the Muslim-led government signed the truce, but the Serbs' allies—both Serbs from neighboring Croatia and renegade Muslims—did not.

The first phase of the cease-fire lasts until Saturday and is meant to give time to work out a comprehensive four-month agreement.

The UN commander for Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose, left Sarajevo for meetings with the Bosnian Serb military commander, Gen. Ratko Mladic, on broadening the cease-fire into a cessation of hostilities. That likely would include pull back of forces from the frontline and positioning of UN troops there.

UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko said Rose was scheduled to meet Bosnian government officials later in the day.

He said the United Nations was showing both sides a draft agree-

ment on cessation of hostilities.

But Izetbegovic warned on Bosnia radio Sunday that the continued fighting around Bihać had put both the cease-fire and truce negotiations in jeopardy.

"There will be no cease-fire" if the attacks don't stop, he said. "Our army will respond on other fronts."

Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganic said Sunday that government troops near Velika Kladusa had come under heavy shelling. The Bosnian government asked for an urgent UN Security Council meeting. Ganic charged that Bosnian Serbs, wearing Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim insignias, were involved in the attacks.

The UN officials said they couldn't confirm if the fighting had been heavy.

But Ivanko said yesterday there had been as few as nine mortar explosions Sunday around Velika Kladusa, one of the main frontline areas in northwestern Bosnia.

He said it was "close to impossible" for Bosnian Serbs to reach the area, where Croatian Serbs and Muslims loyal to warlord Fikret Abdic have been fighting.

Ivanko said Abdic's forces were not bound by the pact. "We can

only hope that he will abide by this cease-fire agreement," he said.

At UN headquarters in Zagreb, Croatia, spokeswoman Claire Grimes said the military situation around Bosnia had been stable Sunday and early yesterday.

But UN officials also said their movement was being severely limited in northwest Bosnia. They expressed new worries about supply shortages for civilians and Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

The under-equipped Bangladeshis have only three or four days more food left, and a convoy would try to reach them today, the United Nations said.

Spokesman Kris Janowski for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said civilians in the area needed daily food convoys, but only three have been permitted in recent weeks.

He said those convoys had experienced "significant harassment."

Negotiations for a lasting peace are difficult because of disagreements over a multinational peace plan the Serbs have rejected.

The plan, worked out by the Contact Group of the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Russia, would have the Serbs relinquish up to one-third of the 70 percent of Bosnia they hold. (AP)

Man on White House fence questioned

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man found clinging to a fence outside the White House on Christmas morning was being questioned yesterday by the Secret Service.

Uniformed officers found Lolo Bello, 19, hanging onto the outside of the fence on Pennsylvania Avenue at about 11:10 a.m. Christmas Day, said Secret Service spokesman Carl Meyer.

"It appeared he might be trying to go over the fence so the uniformed officers grabbed him," Meyer said. Bello was not armed, and Meyer said the man told authorities he just wanted to see the president.

At the time, the Clintons were in the White House celebrating the holiday after attending church services. "At no point were they ever in any danger or for that matter did they even realize what was going on," Meyer said.

Bello was charged with unlawful entry and making threats after arguing with police during the course of his arrest.

Children fight at Aristide party

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AP) — Fights broke out among 1,500 children waiting for refreshments at a Christmas Day party thrown by Jean-Bertrand Aristide at the Presidential Palace.

They grew restless as they waited in their best clothes for the president, they were to meet at 3 p.m. He didn't emerge from the palace until dusk, at 6 p.m.

Aristide appeared at the top of the palace steps and spoke briefly through a microphone.

"Merry Christmas! Do you love your mothers?" he asked. "Yes!" the children responded in unison.

He went back inside. A band began playing Haitian Christmas music and Prime Minister Simeon Michel and others began handing out candy, cake, flavored shaved ice and fruit juice packets.

That prompted a melee. The children grabbed the snacks and fought over pieces of ice.

After the frenzy ended, adult chaperones tried to regroup children in the dark, helped by US Army floodlights.

Twins have seasonal bash

FLITCHAM, England (Reuters) — It was a real seasonal bash for twins Lorraine and Leanne Christmas, who were in hospital yesterday after crashing head-on as they headed to one another's homes to deliver Christmas presents.

The 31-year-old sisters, each driving her own car, collided on a narrow, icy country lane on Christmas Eve, police said.

Family members told British newspapers they were delivering presents to one another.

"People always say the twins always do things together," said their mother Joanne Christmas. "It is remarkable they crashed into each other this time of year."

"We did a double take when we first received details of the accident. We thought it was a practical joke," a police spokesman said.

The two were being treated for chest injuries, whiplash and concussion at a hospital in Norfolk.

'Angry young man' Osborne dies at 65

LONDON (Reuters) — John Osborne, the "angry young man" who transformed British theatre with his blistering social dramas, has died aged 65, hospital officials said yesterday.

The playwright, who shot to fame in 1956 with *Look Back in Anger*, a blast against the stuffy conventions of English post-war life, died of heart failure in a hospital near his home in Shropshire, central England, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Osborne, a diabetic known for his hard drinking, had been seriously ill in hospital for more than a week, she said.

"Mr. Osborne died of heart failure on Christmas Eve. His wife Helen was with him," she said.

Osborne's agent, Gordon Dickenson, told the *Daily Mail*: "We had no hint of any problems until a few weeks ago, but when he went into hospital it became clear that he would not be coming out again."

He added: "It is an enormous loss. He was one of the greatest dramatists and writers."

With *Look Back in Anger* Osborne introduced the genre of the "kitchen sink drama", a revolutionary way of writing using everyday settings. Its hero, Jim

my Porter, became a symbol of educated rebellious youth in the fifties.

John James Osborne was born on December 12, 1929. He revered his father, Thomas, a struggling commercial artist, but hated his mother Nellie Beatrice with a passion.

The family was poor and moved frequently. The young Osborne left to become an actor, but started writing plays at 19.

In 1956 *Look Back in Anger*, which Osborne scribbled down in a reporter's notepad in just 17 days, shocked London theatre audiences and alarmed the country. A successful career followed using his anger as the inspiration for hard-hitting drama.

Osborne also wrote *The Entertainer*, *Inadmissible Evidence*, and *A Patriot for Me*. He won an Oscar for best screenplay with the 1964 film *Tom Jones*.

Richard Burton starred as Jimmy Porter in the film version of *Look Back in Anger*, and Laurence Olivier took the role of Archie Rice in *The Entertainer*. But *Dejavu*, a 1992 sequel to *Look Back in Anger*, flopped.

Osborne's private life was almost as controversial as his drama. Married five times, he gained a reputation as a hard-drinking,

irascible character.

"Who wants to live to 110 anyway if it means not smoking and not drinking?" he asked in a recent interview.

His 1992 autobiography *Almost A Gentleman* brought him much criticism with its vitriolic comments on colleagues and his ex-wives. He described the suicide of his fourth wife, actress Jill Bennett, as the "coarse posturing of an overheated housemaid."

Author-playwright Sheridan Morley told BBC Radio: "He was wonderfully vindictive. He was savage about his own mother in his memoirs. He took no prisoners, gave no hostages. He was full of loathing and bile and yet there was a richness of language in John."

Osborne also blasted British society as a journalist and in letters to newspapers. "Damn you, England," he wrote in the left-wing weekly *Tribune*. "You're rotting now, and quite soon you'll disappear...untouchable, unteachable, impregnable."

Osborne always claimed to be baffled by the public outrage at his scathing attacks.

"I know I am thought to be something of a monster," he told one interviewer. "But I am not sure I understand why."

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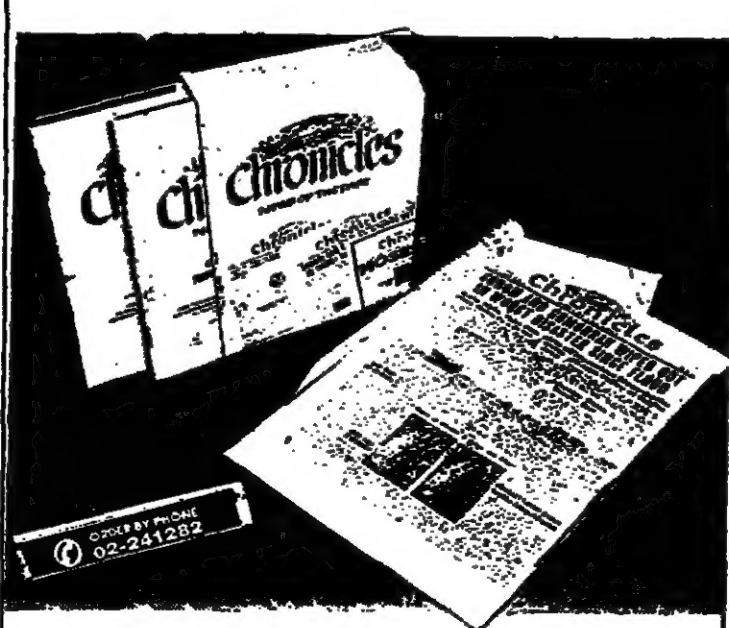
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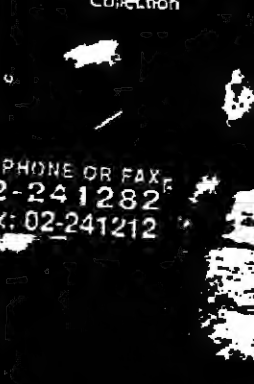
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US optimistic about pilot release

SEOUL (AP) - A high-level meeting yesterday with North Korea yielded "no substantive progress" toward the release of American helicopter pilot Bobby Hall but left US officials optimistic.

"The meeting itself is a positive sign," said Jim Coles, a spokesman for the US and UN military in South Korea.

UN and North Korean army generals met at the truce village of Panmunjom, in the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas.

"No substantive progress was made, and the (North Koreans) would not set a date for Hall's release, maintaining that their investigation into the incident was still continuing," said a statement from the UN Combined Forces Command.

It said UN officials "continued to press for Hall's immediate return and stressed that the border crossing was inadvertent and a routine training flight."

The officers agreed to meet again "in the near future." Coles said officials hoped the session would be today.

UN officials had sought a meeting between high-ranking officers after a lower-level contact Sunday at Panmunjom.

North Korea has held Hall since his US Army OH-58C helicopter strayed across the Demilitarized Zone on Dec. 17 and either was shot down or crashed. Fellow Chief Warrant Officer David Hilemon was killed. His body was returned last Thursday.

US Rep. Bill Richardson, who helped worked out that repatriation, said he was upset Hall had not been released by Christmas.

"I can only tell you I feel, personally, like I've taken a blow to the solar plexus the fact that Bobby Hall is not home. I couldn't sleep much last night," he said in an interview on ABC television in the United States.

"Basically, I'm still confident that the North Koreans will still keep their word, and that is that Hall will be returned very soon as they told," he added.

"What seems to be still the key to unlock this issue is whether North Korea accepts our explanation that this was not an intelligence mission; that it was in fact a training mission, accidental, unintentional," Richardson said.

Pyeongyang has said Hall is in good health but has allowed no foreign contact with him.

Richardson said, "I suspect he is going through interrogations. Obviously, the young man must be a bit distraught. I passed a note to him from his family, his wife, hopefully he received it."

"And yes, you have to be concerned because North Koreans, many times they don't have the same standards of logic that we do. They don't think things through or negotiate the way we do. We just have to hope for the best."

The pilots said in their last radio contact that they were still in South Korea, when in fact they were 5.6 km inside North Korea.



A Russian officer, wearing a mask to prevent identification, talks to a Chechen resident near Samashki, 30 km. west of Grozny. (AP)

Regional victors in Uzbek vote

TASHKENT (Reuters) - Uzbekistan's first parliamentary election since independence looked set yesterday to return a large majority of regionally-backed candidates to power, leaving the two main parties falling far short of their expectations.

No official figures were available the day after the poll, but a spokesman from the ruling Democratic Party said unofficial returns showed his party would win only around 30 percent of places in the new 250-seat parliament.

Figures from the Democratic Party - the former communists - showed the pro-business Fatherland Progress Party taking five percent of the seats.

Regional government nominees - four-fifths of whom are Democrats - were expected to win the other seats outright.

The election commission was due to hold a news conference later yesterday to publish initial figures, but unofficial results are only expected in the next few days.

Some foreign election observers criticized how the election had been organized, pointing to irregularities such as multiple voting by heads of families and a lack of ballot box security.

"We should give them the benefit of the doubt, but I will not say that this election was free, fair and democratic," Jacques Roussellier, a representative from the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe, told Reuters.

He said that multiple voting had raised the turnout to sufficient levels to enable leading candidates to win the absolute majority of votes needed to gain election.

Observers also criticized the close vetting of candidates by the government of President Islam Karimov and the lack of a lively debate in the run-up to the elections in a country where the press is under tight state control.

Roussellier cited the sudden removal from the ticket of the opposition Fatherland Progress Party of banker Rustam Usmanov after Usmanov contradicted government policy by calling for dual citizenship for minority Russians.

Yeltsin offers to halt war

LARRY RYCKMAN
MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin yesterday offered to withdraw his troops from the outskirts of the Chechen capital and said it was time to end Moscow's military campaign in the breakaway Russian republic.

Yeltsin appeared to be indicating that he was prepared to resume peace talks with Chechen leaders who have so far rejected his demands that they disarm their supporters and abandon their drive for independence. There was no immediate response from Chechnya, although one top official said authorities were prepared for negotiations.

Yeltsin's comments to his hawkish Security Council were reported by the Interfax news agency. The panel has been a major force behind the military operation.

Yeltsin said the army could be withdrawn to temporary points on the borders of the Chechen republic, but said he had no plans to take them all the way out of Chechnya.

"It is our republic and troops will be present there permanently," he said. "However, it will be the job of the police to restore order to Grozny and other areas of Chechnya."

Yeltsin's offer, two weeks after he sent up to 40,000 soldiers into Chechnya, came amid sharp disagreements within the military, the

parliament and the Kremlin itself over his decision to use military force.

"We've reached the moment when it's possible to wind up the participation of the military and begin the second stage, to form administrative bodies in the Chechen republic," Interfax quoted him as saying.

"We have reached the stage of restoration of constitutional, legal order," he said.

In another development yesterday, the Russian government press service announced that a Chechen "government of national rebirth," uniting elements of the Chechen opposition, had been established. So far, the Moscow-backed opposition has won little support among the Chechen people.

Yeltsin said he would go on national television today to address the Russian people. He has been largely out of public view since the troops were sent on Dec. 11. His aides have said he was recovering from a minor nose operation.

During yesterday's meeting, Yeltsin also admitted there had been some "difficulties"

in the Chechen operation, but Russian forces had performed "not badly," Interfax reported.

Many Russian soldiers have refused to advance into Grozny, saying they would refuse to fire on civilians. A number of military commanders have reportedly been dismissed for refusing to carry out their orders.

Grozny was reported calm early yesterday, following a rare night without a Russian bomb attack; warplanes last bombed Grozny on Sunday. Heavy fighting was reported in villages outside the besieged city on Sunday.

Yeltsin's decision to send troops has been widely criticized, even by reformers who have supported him in the past. Public opinion surveys indicate that most Russians opposed the use of force.

But so far there has been no response to the call by reformers for mass anti-war demonstrations. Only a few hundred people attended a rally Sunday against the military action in Moscow's Gorky Park.

On Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov said new army attacks would be launched in the next few days if Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev did not take steps to dismantling the republic. (Reuters)

Indian cabinet changes may be delayed

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Leaders of India's ruling Congress Party waited yesterday for a cabinet reshuffle but newspapers said Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao might delay the move for a week.

They said a seven-day state mourning period for former president Zail Singh, who died on Sunday, had given Rao more time to plan the reshuffle after his cabinet was plunged into crisis by five resignations in two weeks.

Some politicians said a new cabinet could be sworn in earlier, possibly after Singh's cremation today. His body was flown to the Indian capital from the northern city of Chandigarh yesterday.

The capital was full of rumors yesterday about the planned reshuffle, part of Rao's move to check a revolt in the ruling party, but politicians were unwilling to discuss it on their telephones.

The Times of India newspaper said yesterday that government intelligence agencies were tapping the telephones of senior politicians and journalists after Rao's main rival Arjun Singh resigned as Human Resource Minister on Saturday and sparked a crisis for Congress.

Politicians would not discuss on the telephone Singh's resignation or Rao's handling of the move.

"If you want my opinion please come and meet me, we can't discuss this on the phone," said Abdul Rahman Antulay, ex-chief minister of western Maharashtra state and Congress party deputy. His colleagues were equally cautious.

Pakistan yesterday accused India of "sponsoring terrorism" in the city of Karachi and told the Indian consulate-general there to close within 10 days.

The Pakistani order to close the mission reflected a clear worsening in the ties between the two traditional foes.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh called the consulate "a center for sabotage" and told reporters Islamabad had indisputable evidence of India's involvement in violence which has killed at least 167 people in Karachi this month.

In New Delhi, an Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman said the move to close the mission "was a matter of greatest regret." He described Islamabad's claim that Indian officials were involved in violence in Karachi as unfounded.

Ten-year-old bluffs his way onto flight

HARARE (AP) - A 10-year-old stowaway tricked his way onto a Dutch airliner by pretending he was following his mother aboard, a news report said yesterday.

The state-run Zimbabwe Inter African News Agency (ZIANA) said cabin crew on an Amsterdam-bound KLM flight found the boy seated in one of the front rows after take-off from Harare.

Ishmael Nyemba had no ticket but said his mother Margaret was in the rear of the plane. He said they were headed to see an uncle in Amsterdam for Christmas.

But checks by the crew soon found Ishmael was alone, and no reservation had been made in his

own or his mother's name for the flight.

ZIANA said authorities at Harare airport have launched investigations into how the child passed unnoticed through immigration and customs barriers to board the KLM flight.

The agency said Ishmael gave the KLM cabin crew a home address but it proved to be false after it was radioed back to Harare and officials went in search of his family.

The KLM office in Harare was closed yesterday and it was not immediately clear if Ishmael had been reunited with family members.

Star of 'South Pacific' dies

ROME - Italian actor Rossano Brazzi, the South Pacific star of the 1950s and '60s who played Continental lovers and aristocrats on Hollywood screens, has died at the age of 78, state television said yesterday.

Brazzi's Latin-lover looks won him starring roles in *Three Coins in the Fountain* (1954) and *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) - both of which were made in Hollywood and set in Italy.

The actor, born in Bologna on September 18, 1916, also had leading roles in *The Ten Commandments* (1945), *Little Women* (1949) - as well as the famed *South Pacific* (1958).

Brazzi died in a Rome clinic from a virus affecting his nervous system.

"Rossano Brazzi will certainly be remembered as one of the few Italian actors known in America as well," said Carlo Verdone, Italian actor and director.

"Brazzi belonged to that group of Italian actors who in the 1950s had characterized the cinema of the 'handsome but capable,' sure, but they conquered the public above all for their male charm," Verdone said.

In the late 1960s, the Bologna-born Brazzi resettled in Italy working in television and cinema. (Agencies)

Another bad year for royal family

AUDREY WOODS
LONDON

QUEEN Elizabeth II became a taxpayer in 1994, learned she was losing her yacht, and saw the Charles and Diana marriage go round still spinning headlines.

No wonder the queen's Christmas Day address to the nation dwelled on South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland, skipping things close to home.

She did, however, suggest that one and all "look to our own faults before we criticize others."

The good news in a dismal royal year was that there might be oil beneath Windsor Castle. But the government gets the proceeds, if any, and Her Majesty would get a drilling rig in the garden.

Prince Charles told the world he had been unfaithful to Princess Diana. Her riding instructor claimed to have been her lover. The tabloids said Diana made nuisance telephone calls.

Charles was caught in the nude by a telephoto camera lens, but the British press declined to join French and German publishers in printing the picture.

An authorized biography of Prince Charles painted the queen as a distant mother, and Prince Philip as an insensitive, overbearing father.

But *The Prince of Wales*, by Jonathan Dimbleby, did give the prince equal time on the issue of the disastrous marriage. He gained points with the public for his candor in a TV documentary, when he admitted cheating on Diana after the marriage had "irretrievably broken down" - not from the start as had been alleged.

Just over a year ago, dazzling Diana retreated from the public eye, appealing for understanding and relief from the constant attentions of the press.

In the months following, she was pursued by a posse of paparazzi, faced intense scrutiny after allegations that nuisance phone calls were made from her private line, and was photographed twice

at surreptitious meetings with a friendly tabloid reporter. She weathered Anna Pasternak's *Princess in Love*, the gushing retelling of James Hewitt's claims that their riding lessons had led to a love affair.

Another book, *Princess Diana, Her New Life* by Andrew Morton, described a princess focused on astrology, colonic irrigation, and her beauty regime.

The queen's other daughter-in-law, the Duchess of York, described to the Washington press corps the hardships of a single mother living in rented housing. "I find myself in uncharted territory," she said.

Fergie's father, Maj. Ronald Ferguson, produced a memoir, implying his daughter had affairs with two Americans after her marriage to Prince Andrew. Just like her old man.

Fergie's mother, Susan Barrantes, told a magazine that the "galloping major" was a philanthropist who made her life hell before she left him in 1974. (AP)

Former MP admits aiding Soviet spy

EDINBURGH (Reuters) - A former British opposition parliamentarian admitted yesterday he had given information to a Soviet intelligence agent for several years but insisted he did not know he was aiding a spy.

Controversial left-winger, Ron Brown said he had had several meetings with Soviet double agent Oleg Gordievsky, a KGB colonel

masquerading as a Tass news agency correspondent in London.

Gordievsky's revelations about his spy career have made front-page news over recent weeks in Britain. Recruited as a double agent by British intelligence in 1974, he is said to be about to name 24 Britons he used in his work in a forthcoming book.

One of those named, journalist

Richard Gott, resigned last month from the *Guardian*.

"I didn't know he (Gordievsky) was a spy," Brown told Reuters. "Most emphatically I was never an agent, paid or unpaid, of the KGB. All the information I gave him was completely non-descript. It was everyday chat, nothing he could not have read in left-wing newspapers."

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Islamic terror strikes again

ANOTHER victory for Islamic terrorism may be recorded after the shocking affair of the Air France airliner. And the failure of the Moslem world to get a grip on this terrorist scourge stands once again in a glaring spotlight.

The beginning of the hijack was almost beyond belief. In the main airport of a country torn apart by fundamentalist terrorism, the four gunmen disguised themselves as airport ground staff and quite simply walked up the gangway onto flight AF 8969 while passengers were boarding the Airbus 300. What this says about security at Algiers needs no elaboration - especially as the plane was an Air France carrier and one would have assumed a prime target for terrorists and a major concern for security officials. The terrorists, barely more than teenagers, murdered a policeman and a Vietnamese diplomat.

The time to act was obviously immediately. If the Algerians felt unable to cope with the situation, there was no excuse for their failure to call in proven experts, whether they be French, British, or German anti-terrorist commandos. French Defense Minister Francois Leotard offered immediate help to end the crisis, but said he did not even get a response. Instead, the

Algerians engaged in futile negotiations for a day and did nothing, even when gunfire erupted on Sunday morning and the body of a French embassy cook was brutally dumped on the tarmac.

It was indeed a blessing that the terrorists headed for Marseille, allowing the French to get on with the job. Prime Minister Balladur's decision to order the military operation was absolutely right and brilliantly executed by the French commando unit, with the minimum of casualties and the death of the terrorists.

Two weeks ago in Casablanca, the Islamic Conference states issues a stream of platitudes about Islamic terrorism. Yet their main concern seemed to be that terrorism was giving Moslems a bad image. The thrust of their resolutions was to counter the threat by a propaganda campaign to explain to the world how gentle and humanitarian Islam is. But the way to clear the name of the decent Moslem majority is to get to grips with this plague in more effective ways. If the Islamic world with its vast arsenal and finances could first come up with an anti-terrorist squad half as good as the French, the world may begin to believe its conference declarations are worth more than the paper they are written on.

Time to stop in Grozny

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin's declaration that it is time to halt the military operation in Chechnya is welcome. The sooner it can be done, the better. The general support Yeltsin has received in the West, especially from Washington, for his move against the Chechens is in danger of reversing itself. The television images of death and destruction being rained on Grozny were not what Russia's backers in the West had in mind.

The rebellious Chechen leaders, with their unrealistic and inept effort to establish an unworkable Islamic republic in the Caucasus, may have brought their troubles on their own heads, but the Russian assault has been hampered to say the least. The air force's apparent inability to hit military targets has raised inevitable accusations that the military commanders weren't even trying. The suspicion has been growing that the aim of the bombing has been to terrorize the population into submission.

The war is joining Vietnam and Afghanistan as a public relations disaster for the attacking forces. Even the most naive politician in Russia must have been aware that, in these days of global television, the world's viewers are not going to stomach for long the disintegration of a city before their eyes, with its sad toll of dead and dying civilians and terrified children.

It is hard to find any justification at all for the blitz on Grozny. Since the Chechens were known to be lightly-armed and short of ammunition, a few precise strikes on their main artillery positions should have been all that was required. Yeltsin first promised the intervention

would be a quick and carefully-handled operation - a Haiti rather than an Afghanistan. It has turned into a bloodstained mess, swinging sympathy behind rebels who deserved little in the first place. As *The New York Times* has pointed out this week, Chechnya may indeed be an internal affair of the Russian Federation, but that doesn't mean there are not political realities in the outside world.

In its present fragile democratic and economic state, Russia simply cannot afford to generate hostile public opinion in the powerful Western countries by portraying an image of brutality and an unfeeling disregard for human rights in Chechnya. The West has been indulgent of Russia and its problems since the fall of Communism. It will do the international community no good if prejudices are rekindled about hard-line, militaristic, brutal Russians, leading to inevitable hostility.

There are already signs that key figures in the incoming Republican-dominated US Congress will have a more scathing attitude to Moscow than the Clinton administration. The Russian Security Council's statement yesterday that the intervention would now aim to "disarm illegal armed elements" is a perfectly acceptable objective - if it is carried out at the low-level police-like intensity the statement implies. All we have seen so far is an attempt to flatten Grozny with little regard for the civilians there, ironically many of them Russian residents. Yeltsin must know that, in the final analysis, governments that prosecute ill-conceived and unpopular wars get flattened themselves.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE DHIMMA

Sir, - I refer to Yoash Tsiddon-Chano's article of November 18, "The dream of Israeli Arabs." No nation-state in the world has ever accepted the concept of binationality. No state would survive its implementation. Canada and Belgium are constantly on the verge of splitting up because of the national tensions generated between their French and English or their French and Flemish national groups. Other nations, notably in the Arab world or the Middle East, are ferocious in the suppression of Kurdish, Berber or Christian-African national rights. Neither France nor Spain will ever grant real separate nationality to their Breton, Catalan or Basque minorities. What can possibly possess the Arabs of Israel to believe that they can get away with these outrageous and lunatic ideas? The UN Partition resolution called for separate Jewish and Arab States. In their collective wisdom, they did not see any future in bi-nationality.

Quite evidently, the Israeli Arabs see themselves as Palestinians and not Israelis. Should this continue to be the case, they must be given every opportunity to cross the Jordan and work out their destiny there. It appears that there are a number of historical lessons which they have signally failed to learn. Perhaps the most important one is that a population exchange occurred in 1948 and that the Jews who came from Arab and Moslem lands had lived what André Chouraqui has called a "long nightmare" under Islamic rule. That is behind them now and will never, never be repeated. For too long, we have been treated to the fable of the so-called "Golden Age" of Arab-Jewish coexistence. Alas, it was a mere 200-year interregnum, between massacre and massacre, in a

1,300-year program of institutionalized inferiority, the *dhimma*.

It is high time that the Sephardi experience under Islam was given generous and much more explicit coverage. Israel needs a Sephardi museum with an entire section devoted to the lives of communities under the yoke of the *dhimma*. Israeli Arabs must be invited to visit, if not indeed compelled to visit, the museum. If they, understandably, feel no responsibility for the Shoah, they do bear a huge responsibility for what happened in the Arab world. Islam was and is their world and Islam treated the Jews in the Dar-al-Islam with calculated contempt. Sephardi Jews all over the Arab and Moslem world needed the return to Zion as much as did the Jews of the Pale.

JOHN D. NORMAN

London.

THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

Sir, - M.A. Harog (Letters, November 7) gave two reasons for the alienation of the general public from the religious establishment. I would add the following: Apart from students of the hesder yeshivot, most yeshiva students do not do army service. Directions are given in the Tanach for army service in time of war. How can these students give this service if they are not trained? They provide many specious arguments as to why they should not serve. But the Tanach also states that there should not be the slightest deviation from the laws. It is no wonder that many of the general public look upon these students as parasites.

There is a strong feeling that the political-religious establishment is in the forefront of the swindlers, both in an establishment sense (the registration of yeshiva students as such, even though these so-called students work and do not study, see the Controller's report) and in a private sense, viz. the scandals surrounding the convicted, the not-yet-convicted and the lucky-not-to-have-been-convicted religious members of the Knesset.

There are few factors which have done more to disgust the general public than the vulgar behavior of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. I can understand and sympathize with the prime minister's willingness to sacrifice everything but security in the interests of peace, but it is a pity that the dignity of the government and the State of Israel should be sullied by this person.

MICHAEL ALGE

Kiryat Tivon.

SEXUAL FACT

Sir, - I refer to Joshua Berman's article of December 16, "Free tickle," and wish to point out that homosexuality is not an option, it is not something you choose to be, it is something you are, whether you like it or not. So I would like to call it a sexual fact instead of a sexual preference.

Does Mr. Berman want to force every homosexual into a heterosexual marriage and fatherhood in order to continue this Jewish society? What kind of Jewish society will it be with self-denying, unhappy, forced spouses and fathers? What effect will this have on the children?

I suggest that Mr. Berman face reality and respect and accept it.

GASTON MOL

Givat Haim Menhad.



Pollard and Dreyfus

BRUCE BRILL

NONE of the events organized in 1994 to mark 100 years since the Dreyfus Affair drew any parallels with the Pollard affair. Yet a close look reveals striking similarities.

In both cases there was extraordinarily cruel treatment. Dreyfus was exiled not to New Caledonia, which was usual, but to the solitary hell of Devil's Island. Pollard received life imprisonment for passing intelligence to an ally. Until recently, he was held in solitary confinement in an underground cell at Marion Federal Penitentiary. Today he is in Bumer Prison, North Carolina, where many of his fellow prisoners are Black Moslems and American Nazis who threaten his life.

In her opening remarks at the International Dreyfus Centennial Conference, MK Shulamit Aloni noted that the major Dreyfus protagonists, Georges Picquart and Emile Zola, were Gentiles. Likewise, of the three judges reviewing Pollard's trial, only Steven Williams, the only non-Jew, said unequivocally: "The government's conduct in this case resulted in a fundamental and complete miscarriage of justice."

Lucie Dreyfus never abandoned hope of her husband's eventual acquittal. She first petitioned the Chamber of Deputies to reopen the investigation, and later petitioned Premier Brisson for cabinet approval to conduct another review, which began in November 1898.

Similarly, first Ann Henderson

inform the Israelis. In 1974, I was indeed "having a problem" about that.

After the interview, the possibility that I might violate my secrecy oath was on record - and yet I was offered a position.

Was a potential "Pollard" being sought back in 1974? Pollard's dedication to the Jewish people was well known. He was recruited to his position, bargained by antisemitic harangues from his coworkers, privy to intelligence vital for Israel and was granted a courier pass facilitating his taking classified material. This surely smells of a setup.

Dreyfus's counterintelligence coworkers falsified documents. Dreyfus's chief detractor, Major Hubert Henry, furiously submitted a forged document to the presiding judges just before the verdict, leading to a unanimous guilty verdict.

Caspar Weinberger slipped a recommendation to Pollard's judge. In both cases, the submission was illicit, and the contents of the documents kept from the public and the defense.

The French Jewish community distanced itself from the Dreyfus Affair; so has the US Jewish community vis-à-vis Pollard. Dreyfus eventually had the full support of the intellectual community, with writer Emile Zola in the vocal vanguard. After nine years in prison, Pollard is still waiting for his Zola.

The writer is a Mideast security analyst.

After romance, the reality

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

THE American romance with the new Russia received its first jolt a year ago. In their first ever post-communist election, half the Russian people voted for fascist or communist parties openly yearning for Russia's lost empire.

The election returns have, over the course of 1994, been dramatically translated into a newly assertive nationalist policy, prepared to challenge Western aims and influence.

The new policy defines a Russian national interest with two major themes: local hegemony over the ex-Soviet Union, hence the military meddling in the republics of Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan; and recognition as a great power, demanding a place at the table in deciding the fate of world trouble spots - hence the challenge to the Western position in regional conflicts such as Iraq, Kuwait and Bosnia-Serbia.

Then, earlier this month, came Yeltsin's invasion of the small autonomous republic of Chechnya in the Caucasus.

Moslem non-Slavic Chechnya declared itself independent three years ago. After a clumsy, Bay-of-Pigs-type operation failed to bring down the rebel government, Yeltsin simply ordered in the tanks, Czech-style circa 1968.

With these actions, the debate about how to deal with Russia comes to an end.

One school viewed Russia as incorrigibly expansionist and in need of restraining by the West. The other school held that we should do nothing that might jeopardize Russia's democratic, capitalist evolution. And that to expand NATO or object to Russian incursions in neighboring territory would weaken the pro-Western voices in Moscow.

THE EVENTS of 1994 have

made the second view moot. Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev have adopted the nationalist line as their own. The Chechen invasion was conducted over the bitter objections of their liberal allies and to the applause of the fascist Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

The old Yeltsin, the one who acquiesced to Western aims, sought a "partnership" with the US and was accused of being an American doormat, was indeed domestically vulnerable to such Western moves as the expansion of NATO. But the nationalist Yeltsin, the one who wrecked Clinton's appearance at the Budapest conference on European security by blaming Washington for precipitating a "cold peace," has cured his domestic vulnerability on the East-West issue.

For the newly minted tough guy, a Western challenge is not a threat but an opportunity to display nationalist credentials.

The vision of a Russia integrated into a Western security system, or acting like a reformed postwar Japan and Germany, stands exposed as a mirage. The truth is far nearer Henry Kissinger's view of Russia determined to remain apart from and often opposed to Europe and the West.

The US administration has tried to straddle the issue of Russian apartness in classic Clinton style: trying to please everyone, promising the East Europeans that NATO membership is a question of "when" not "if," while at the same time trying to induce the Russians to join the Partnership for Peace, a loose association with NATO that would encompass all the ex-communist states, including Eastern Europe.

On December 1, the Russians finally decided that they would

no longer play along. At the NATO ceremony marking Russia's formal accession to the Partnership for Peace, Kozyrev refused at the last moment to sign on.

Rather than respond to this slap in the face by brushing it aside, as the State Department did, we should instead turn the crisis into an opportunity to acknowledge the new Russian reality. We should say to Kozyrev:

Fine. Perhaps you are right. The Partnership for Peace may not be a good idea after all. We cannot bring all the ex-communist states under a single umbrella. Russia should be treated entirely differently. And it will be.

Accordingly, Europe's ex-communist states - Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia - will, in three years' time, be brought into NATO. At the same time, NATO will negotiate bilaterally with Russia whatever kind of association Russia deems possible, from friendly co-operation to chilly coexistence. Your call. But the fate of Eastern Europe is not.

The romantic period is over.

(Washington Post Writers Group)

(Baltimore Sun)

(Baltimore Sun)

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Greasy makes dumb

KEVIN COWHERD

ALL in all, this is probably not the best of times for the fast-food industry.

I say this because of the latest alarming study, which indicates that greasy hamburgers and other fatty foods may diminish intelligence.

Apparently it wasn't enough that these foods can make you heavy. Now it seems they could make you stupid, too.

In any event, the study, conducted by a dietitian and a psychology professor at the University of Toronto, measured the responses of 40 rats kept on a high-fat diet for six months.

On the face of it, it doesn't seem like a bad deal if you're a rat.

I'm afraid of ending up like those experimental rats

Basically, you get to hang out in your cage all day while people bring you burgers, fries and chocolate shakes and say: "Here, eat, eat. And there's plenty more where that came from."

But some of these rats became so stupid you wanted to smack them on their little heads.

Over the course of the study, the rats' behavior was charted, and they were tested for learning and memory.

But by the end of the six months, even given the simplest tasks to perform, the rats were like: "Yeah, whatever. Gimme another cheeseburger over here, chief."

No matter what you asked these rats to do, they'd just sort of stare at you and go: "Euh?"

Anyways, even though the study was done on rats, the researchers concluded that it "has implications for the human condition. There is enough similarity between our basic physiologies."

WHICH SHOULDN'T surprise anyone who's ever sat in a McDonald's during lunch hour.

I love these people who wait in line at McDonald's for 10 minutes, and when it's finally their turn to order, they look up at the menu.

Tell me something: Why would anyone have to look at the menu at McDonald's? The menu's been the same for what, 30 years?

Hamburger, cheeseburger, Big Mac, Quarter-pounder... it is really so hard to remember this stuff? What do you think they're serving now, salmon amandine?

Or are you afraid you're going to get to the cashier and go blank? "Yeah, gimme a hamburger and... oh, those yellow, crunchy things... lemme look at the menu here. Fries! That's what they're called!"

Look, I'm not the brightest guy in the world. But there are times I walk out of there feeling like Louis Pasteur.

Anyway, the University of Toronto researchers now plan to study humans. They want to know whether people who make a diet change late in life because of high cholesterol show an improvement in cognitive ability.

Which is fine by me.

Look, I don't care what all these greasy burgers and fatty foods do to rats.

I don't care how stupid they make them, or what it does to their university entrance exam scores.

I want to know what these foods do to me. I want to know if I'm headed in the same direction as some of those dimwits at McDonald's.

POSTSCRIPT

HERE'S A gift for the child who has everything: the child itself, in the form of a doll.

Kira Pratt Davis, a portrait artist from Takoma Park, Maryland, hand-paints the "self-portraits" with watercolors on heavy cardboard. The dolls can be played with and dressed in outfits.

"The children are delighted to see themselves," says Davis, who started her business, Paper Faces, two years ago. "It makes them feel special to have a doll that is really them."

The 30 cm. doll sells for \$65 and 12 paper outfits are included, including Goldilocks' dresses for girls, or Davy Crockett or Erik the Red outfits for boys. Davis says some clients request custom additions for their dolls, such as accompanying portraits of pet dogs and cats.

The artist recalls one particularly poignant client. An 89-year-old woman suffering from arthritis couldn't hold her new great-grandson, so she was given a paper doll of herself holding the paper baby.

Guest director: Local critics wrong about us

IN a large, empty room a few young actors are packing their things.

They appear eager to call it a day, but it's not over yet. A heated discussion is still in process, and it's clear who's running the show.

Robert Woodruff, his black hair tied in a ponytail, dark sunglasses hiding his facial expressions, is trying to make sense of the music that accompanies one of the scenes in *The Changeling*, the play he is directing for the Beersheba Municipal Theater.

If actors thought they went through hell during the initial rehearsal period in Tel Aviv, Woodruff promises the technical rehearsals in Beersheba will be worse. "They can't imagine yet what they'll be going through," says the 47-year-old director.

Woodruff, whose mother was born in Haifa, is making his professional debut here, directing the Beersheba company in a play written more than 350 years ago by two Englishmen, Thomas Middleton and William Rowley. The Jacobean revenge tragedy is replete with passion, deceit and gore.

A month before last week's opening, Woodruff found time to talk about his unusual theatrical credo.

"I know this sounds blasphemous, but the story is not high on the list of the things that interest me. I'm not a good storyteller," he says.

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

He's more interested "in the event and the moment and not the sequence of moments. Yes, the event needs the story to hang on to, but I'm not interested in the narrative at all. The road is the road. I'm interested in the side trips. I don't come from an esthetic of wholeness but of fractions."

Woodruff found himself directing here at a time when the local press and directors were accusing theater managements of employing too many foreign directors to no good effect.

"Productions with foreign directors are boring," says actor Yossi Pollak. "Most of the time is spent on trying to understand each other."

Woodruff disputes this view. "Everyone speaks English here so there's no real problem. I don't have to work through an interpreter, it's very straightforward. And my Hebrew vocabulary is growing by leaps and bounds. By now I do have my anchors in the text. And I like the way the play sounds in Hebrew; it's guttural, which is important."

Indeed, Woodruff believes the translation by Aharon Shabtai will help local audiences to enjoy the play more than an American audience might. "The language in this play is more accessible to Israelis than it would be to an American audience dealing with

Jacobean English."

During a directing career spanning two decades, Woodruff has worked with some of the more prominent names in the US, from Sam Shepard to Joseph Chaikin, from Stephen Poliakoff to the Flying Karamazov Brothers. But he is no longer interested in working with what he calls "those living people."

Today, he adds, "there are only a few American playwrights who interest me. I'm less interested in working with playwrights on plays now. I'm looking for a collaborator with whom to work on a live event."

But it isn't easy to find the right venues. The New York theater scene, according to Woodruff, isn't "interested in experiments." Woodruff likes working in universities, which, he says, is about as close to a company as you can get in the US.

Woodruff, who is intensely critical of the time pressure put on directors all over the world, is reasonably happy with the nine weeks of rehearsals he had for *The Changeling*. But he can't understand why there is no preview system in Israel.

"All the emphasis is on the first night. But that's also the first time I see the show, and if you're trying to invent something, then maybe it's going to take time, and things can change after the show goes on stage. You need to allow time for that as well."



Robert Woodruff challenges critics who say the theaters are employing too many foreign directors to no good effect.

Going for Gorki

HELEN KAYE

THE play is Russian, the company and director are Russian speakers, and the inspiration comes straight from the streets of Tel Aviv.

It was there that Yevgeny Arye, who's directing the Geshen Theater's production of Maxim Gorki's *The Lower Depths*, observed a well-known beggar.

"He props himself up on his bits of cardboard, usually half-drunken and always dirty, but he's always there and he's not going to change. He doesn't really want to."

This source of inspiration, and the fact that rehearsals are in Hebrew, are signs of the increasing integration of Geshen - which means bridge - into the local theatrical scene.

The company was formed in 1990, the year Arye arrived from Moscow with a company of hand-picked actors. They have been winning critical acclaim ever since.

In the Geshen production that opens tomorrow, Israel Demidov has the lead role of the baron, an aristocrat fallen on hard times. He lives in a basement along with the rest of the pimps, whores, thieves, drifters and grifters who live hard and die nastily on the far edges of society.

And usually that's the way it's done, all grime, grunge and misery as the characters bemoan their sorry lot.

"But no," insists Arye. "They live. They're happy and even when they speak of their hard lives, they don't really want to change them. It's when Luka [Vladimir Vorobyov] comes with ideas to change their lives that

they too begin to want [change] and because of that, all the terrible things happen."

Arye looks at his watch. He has to be at the theater at noon and neither he nor the actors will leave until two or three in the morning. The rehearsals are in Hebrew and some of the company, especially the younger members, are pretty fluent even off stage, but not Arye.

"I've not really had time to learn," he says apologetically, lighting another cigarette from one of the two packs lying on the cafe table.

In 1976, the year after he graduated from the Leningrad Institute of Theater, Arye - now 47 - was voted the USSR's Best Young Director for his Leningrad production of *Twelfth Night*. Three years later, his *Mother Courage* won first prize at the Leningrad Festival.

Arye wanted to come to Israel but his application to leave the USSR was turned down, and he didn't work for a year. To make money, he ghost-wrote a doctoral thesis for a friend. Gradually the work started coming again and he went on directing shows and winning prizes in Leningrad and Moscow. In 1990, he premiered *Rosencranz and Guildenstern* at the Mayakovsky Theater in Moscow.

Even in school Arye had put together a company of actors "because an ensemble is the only way to work in theater. We have to build a common vision of life so that we can find what we're looking for without a lot of talk."

Definitive Johnny Cash retrospective is right on the money

JOHNNY Cash may be keen on Jesus and happily married into the Carter family - country music's equivalent of royalty - but one would be loath to call him un-hip.

Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and Bono of U2 are among his admirers, and Cash has returned the favor by recording songs by all three.

The Man In Black, Johnny Cash: The Definitive Collection (NMC) is a 24-song retrospective

going all the way back to a 1967 recording of the self-penned "Ring of Fire" and up to 1983's "Highway Patrolman" by Springsteen.

Musically, Cash is no innovator. Nonetheless the productions built around what he calls "my three guitar chords," do vary. What remains constant is the direct delivery of his rumbling voice.

It is hard, even for someone who generally doesn't listen to Country and Western, not to be

disarmed by him. The album is full of songs I'd either never heard or never really listened to, which proved remarkably powerful.

The first number to reach out and grab me was the infectiously joyous "Get Rhythm (When Ya Get the Blues)".

It immediately brought to mind the clip of Elvis doing his wildly uninhibited, orgasmic jerk in the film *Forrest Gump*. It's that "out there."

It also turns out that the song

NEW RELEASES

IRAZAH AGASSI

was specifically written for Elvis, though he never recorded it.

Another song that causes one to pause is a contrived "It Ain't Me Babe." Back in '63, when Cash was already a major star at Columbia Records, he talked them out of dropping a new boy called Bob Dylan, who wrote it.

Cash's "I Still Miss Someone," which has been covered by just about everyone, including the young Joan Baez, accentuates the closeness between the higher-brow folkies and down-home Country and Western.

Kris Kristofferson's vivid "Sunday Morning Coming Down," with its mournful yet witty description of longing for the clean life, is another knockout.

Cash makes you believe in fam-

ily values with songs like "Daddy Sang Bass" (written for the Carter family by Carl Perkins), which exude country fresh air.

Most people have heard "Folsom Prison Blues" but "San Quentin," recorded live in the penitentiary in 1969, is even more impressive. It's the way he looks, talks and sings straight at the prisoners, with no hint of preachiness, that makes him so great. "Singin' in Vietnam Talkin' Blues," in which Cash describes

his and Carter's fear and horror while entertaining the troops, is a real landmark.

Cash was just about the only country star to come out against the war, doing so with an unparalleled mix of loyalty to the troops and conviction that he wanted them home.

It's that kind of authority, integrating the insights of the intellectuals with the gut wisdom of the home folks, that is so missing in America today.

Jurors harp on technique, more than on temperament

THE jury in the International Harp Contest, which ended last week, showed good judgment in awarding the second- and third-place prizes - there was no first-place winner - and corroborating the observations of this self-styled juror.

"Grand drama, exuberant" were the comments written in the margins of my program at an earlier stage of the contest about eventual second-place winner, Anna Makarova from Russia.

Near the name of the third prize winner, Godelive Schramma from Holland, were the remarks "thoughtful, sense of dream transparent, personal touch."

The final results might nevertheless have been different. Some contestants also deserved to advance to the second stage for purely musical reasons, if not for their technical skills, but were eliminated in the first round. That is what happened to several East Asian contestants whose subtlety was wasted on the jury.

A partial correction of this deplorable state of affairs was accomplished by Victor Salvi of the international honorary committee. He valiantly permitted himself to offer a significant gift - not to be called a prize - to Xavier de Maistre from France who, despite his elegant, meditative playing, had been denied a prize.

The prize for the best performance of the Israeli work went to Stasa Mirkovic from Yugoslavia, who played Josef Tal's "Dispute" with sharp contrasts. But she stayed in low gear, so much so that one wondered whether she would have earned the prize if she had played like this in the contest itself.

Nika Riabchenko from Russia, prize winner for the best performance of the contemporary work - which also happened to be Israeli - rendered Ma'ayan's

CONCERT ROUNDUP

"Toccata" with much prize-worthy freshness and even excitement, coupled with a well-developed sense of form.

Jerusalem City Hall, December 20
Ury Eppstein

ANY doubts as to whether such a demanding work as Mahler's Fifth Symphony could be played adequately by a youth ensemble were dispersed thoroughly by the International Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorin Maazel, in the opening concert of the Classical Winter series.

The maturity of an outstanding conductor together with the freshness and eagerness of the young members produced a unique combination that elicited results of which any orchestra of adults could be justifiably proud.

The young players went beyond the essentials of accuracy, togetherness, purity of intonation and responsiveness to the conductor's intentions. In Maazel's own words, they succeeded in expressing "the music behind the notes."

Jerusalem International Convention Center, December 21
Ury Eppstein

THE relation between Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*, Puccini's *Turandot* and liturgical music remained obscure in the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra's opening concert of its Liturgical series, conducted by David Shalom.

The program's first part, a hodgepodge of light classical pieces, was suitable for a summer promenade concert more than for an event giving itself airs of liturgical connotations and labeling itself "festive." The melange of operatic selections, cantorial pieces and a Ladino melody could have been, at least, amusing if presented in a different, less pe-

thetically pretentious context.

Noam Sheriff's *Sephardi Passion*, in its first ISO performance, is a determined attempt at portraying the horrors of the Inquisition by clever, professionally calculated manipulations. Sheriff contrasts instrumental and vocal outbursts with low-volume, lyrical settings of a lullaby and a psalm. Whether these really rise to the enormous challenge of reflecting the monstrous dimensions of the Inquisition remains, at best, an open question.

Ethnically flavored Sephardi melismata, rendered admirably by alto Etti Keinan-Ofri, added another obvious yet eclectic element. It was familiar to local audiences but would predictably be perceived as an imaginative touch by the European listeners of the work's world premiere in Spain.

Alberto Mizrahi has a formidable voice but uses it as a dramatic, even heroic, tenor in unambiguously lyrical arias.

The Radio Buharest and Jerusalem Oratorio choirs would have been more enjoyable had they not sung fortissimo in many of their piano passages.

Jerusalem Theater, December 24
Ury Eppstein

Acting undercuts production's powerful promise

MACBETH

By William Shakespeare. Hebrew, Meir Wieselizer. Director, Toby Robertson. Set, Erez Yaari. Costumes, Eilat Kosh. Music, Dori Paras. At Habimah's Bimartel, Tel Aviv.

Macbeth Asher Tzarfat
Lady Macbeth Liora Rivlin
Duncan Yossi Yablouka

AFTER some of the gory, ketchy dances of death that have masked this greatest of tragedies in recent years, Habimah's recent version is well worthwhile.

It is set against a stark metallic background of sliding screens. The latter, together with blood-red lighting (Bambi's), savage

sound effects and slick combat choreography, suggests the black poetry of a power-driven impulse to kill that informs the play.

That, with a perfectly paced production and imaginative direction, promises a powerful *Macbeth*. When it comes to the acting, however, all is not on a par with the rest.

Possibly in the cozy intimacy inevitable with theater-in-the-round, the impact of the tragic is

THEATER REVIEW

NAOMI DOUDAI

diminished. But even more reductive is the substitution of a punk princess for Hecate and some wishy-washy video clips for the three witches.

Asher Tzarfat's *Macbeth*, though loaded with rushes of self-deprecating agony, relies on morbidity and blood-drunk brutality. The subtler schizoid sense of disillusion and despair is altogether absent.

The main problem is Lady

Macbeth. Liora Rivlin, noted for her in-depth performance of many difficult roles, is here impossibly miscast.

If the tiny, teeny-weeny quality of her voice did not disqualify her for the part, her mask of sexy, high-society hostess would.

By contrast Haim Hovav gives an impassioned performance as Banquo. Yussif Abu-Vara's *Macduff* reaches stirring heights of pathos, Yossi Yablouka's Duncan a benign dignity, while Ohad Shahar's Porter provides satiric relief with a vividly clownish counterpoint to the on-going horror.

Philippe Genty brings the circus back to town

DANCE REVIEW

DORA SOWDEN

of a puppet, or turns into an empty heap of clothes or a mass of struggling bodies.

As dance, *Drifting* has three

claims. Movement is precise, and perfectly timed to cleverly chosen music. The dancing is always splendid, and especially beautiful

where a young woman wields wired clouds of nylon assisted by four males in evening dress. Most of all there is the unfailing rhythm of the whole show from the time the first figures in long coats slide about the floor with no visible sign of leg motion, like Turkish folk dancers.

The International Symphony Orchestra

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THE JERUSALEM POST

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TOWER RECORDS' TOP 15

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	ON CHARTS	ARTIST	TITLE
1	1	10	CRANBERRIES	NO NEED TO ARGUE
2	2	4	BEATLES	LIVE AT THE BBC
3	3	8	NIRVANA	UNPLUGGED IN NEW YORK
4	4	9	SADE	BEST OF
5	5	18	RTA	THE GRAND LOVE
6	6	7	STING	FIELDS OF GOLD
7	7	3	DANA INTERNAT'L	UMPATAMPA
8	8	54	BOAZ SHARAI	YOU ARE THE NIGHT TO ME
9	9	1	SHERYL CROW	TUESDAY NIGHT MUSIC CLUB
10	10	1	ACHINAM NINI	VITOLGY
11	11	2	VARIOUS ARTISTS	NINI AND DOR
12	12	3	VARIOUS ARTISTS	NOW 28
13	13	1	DAVID BROZA	THE HOP HOORAY
14	14	1	FILM SOUND TRACK	THE STUFF OF LOVE
15	15	1		PULP FICTION

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Hong Kong stocks have rough ride

HONG KONG (Reuters) — What a difference a year makes. Just 12 months ago, most Hong Kong brokers, riding the tide of a startling 118 percent 1993 bull market rally, were predicting solid gains for the year ahead.

One survey in late December last year showed that on average, brokers expected the benchmark Hang Seng Index to reach about 13,000 by the end of 1994. In fact, the blue-chip index hit its intra-day low for 1994 of 7,670.83 on December 12 and closed at 8,412.66 on Thursday.

The levels experts predicted would be touched at the end of 1994 now appear unachievable even by the end of 1995, with analysts now expecting tough market conditions through the first half of the year amid unabated interest rate uncertainty.

"What has changed in the last six months has been interest rates, China and property, probably in that order," said Adrian Faure, Merrill Lynch research director. "It was 15 months ago that precisely those three issues were driving the market up, and as they all reversed the market went with it."

On February 4, Hong Kong's blue-chip Hang Seng Index closed at about 12,158, just 43.5 points below its record closing high posted exactly a month earlier.

But later that day, the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates for the first time in five years in an effort to cool economic growth and keep inflation in check.

Five more rate increases followed throughout the year, keeping investors and the market off balance, and analysts expect at least one more increase soon.

Faure said Merrill expects a US Federal Reserve funds increase of 50 to 75 basis points in January.

"Those of us who are more bullish believe that US interest rates will probably stop going up sometime in the middle of 1995," said John Quinn, chief investment officer at Natwest Investment Management Asia.

Adding to stocks' woes this year was concern over the health of China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, as well as the country's inability to reign in economic growth and ease raging inflation, three issues not likely to go away soon.

"The economic situation in China, whether inflation is going to show signs of improvement, and the stability of the political situation, especially if Deng Xiaoping passes away — those are key issues," for Hong Kong stocks, said Percy Au-Yang, research director at DBS Securities.

Hong Kong's important property sector has been weak all year, hit by both higher interest rates and government measures aimed at keeping prices in check. Analysts said prices have fallen about 20 percent this year.

Analysts said that given the uncertain interest rate outlook, the property market is likely to be on edge for the first half of next year, even though they do not see much more downside for property prices or property stock prices.

"My scenario is that property prices continue to deflate a while longer, but with most of that is already in the prices of the stocks," Quinn at Natwest said.

Through mid-December, the Hang Seng had lost nearly 35 percent this year, inducing some analysts to talk about fair value but not yet to label the market a strong buy.

"At current ratings, this should be a time where investors start to reinvest money into the market," said Danny Truett at S.G. Warburg.

He said the brokerage recently raised its 12-month rating on Hong Kong to neutral from underweight but kept its three-month underweight rating.

"I think the market offers a lot of value at this level," Au-Yang said. But he added that prices could fall further, with a downside limit of 7,000.

So with little upside potential expected for the first half of next year, will second-half gains be enough to give the market a decent year-on-year return?

Truett said he has a mid-year target for the Hang Seng of 8,600 and that if interest rates stabilize, 9,500 could be reached by the end of the year.

US economy expected to show signs of wear in '95

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The US economy enjoyed the best of all possible worlds in 1994 — solid growth with low inflation — but it is likely to start showing some signs of wear in the new year.

Economists inside and outside the government expect growth to slow and inflation to accelerate moderately in 1995, as industry steams along at almost full capacity after more than 3-1/2 years of expansion. But the US should be able to avoid falling into a recession, although some private economists fear a downturn could develop in 1996, ahead of the presidential election.

A survey of 50 top economists this month by Eggert's Blue Chip newsletter shows that on average they expect growth to slow to 2.9 percent next year from 3.9 percent this year.

year and inflation to speed up to 3.4 percent from 2.7 percent in 1994.

The Commerce Department reported that gross domestic product expanded by 4 percent in the third quarter, and analysts expect the economy to match or better that performance in the final three months of this year.

"The economy goes into the new year with a lot of momentum," said David Jones, chief economist at Wall Street broker Anthony G. Lantoni and Co.

Analysts said the economy's performance in 1995 will largely be shaped by trends set in train this year — tighter credit, expanded trade and potentially major shifts in budget policy by the new Republican-controlled Congress.

In an effort to prevent the economy from overheating and

thus extend the expansion, the Federal Reserve began raising interest rates this year for the first time in five years, bringing them up by 2-1/2 percentage points.

The higher rates, which affect everyone from consumers using credit cards to companies borrowing to build factories — have so far not had much discernible impact on the economy, but should begin to bite in 1995.

Further rate increases — perhaps as much as one percentage point — are expected early next year as the central bank struggles to slow growth down to a 2-1/2 percent per year cruising speed without triggering a recession.

The Fed has only been able to pull off such a "soft landing" for the economy twice in its history — in 1966 and 1980 — but economists

believe it stands as good a chance as any in succeeding this time around.

"We could still get a soft landing, although it could be a bumpy ride for the financial markets," said David Hale, chief economist at Kemper Financial Services company in Chicago.

While inflation is expected to accelerate next year, the pick-up will be modest, economists said. That should allow the Fed to limit its interest rate increases in 1995.

"I don't see... a resurgence of inflation," said Patrick Jackson, an economist at the Labor Department, which compiles the monthly inflation statistics.

The economy on the whole has also been able to avoid many of the excesses that often presage a recession, although some warn-

ing signals are starting to flash.

Consumers are going deeper into debt, companies are building up inventories and banks are starting to push loans on to borrowers that may not be able to repay them.

"We are in the danger zone," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Minneapolis-based Northwest Corp. "The current cycle looks more and more like a boom and bust cycle."

What should help prevent that from occurring — at least next year — is increased US exports.

Overseas economies, particularly Europe and to a lesser extent Japan, began recovering this year after lengthy recessions and are expected to strengthen further in 1995, spurring foreign demand for American products.

"The outlook for 1995... seen from a global perspective is one of gathering boom conditions," said James Griffin, vice president, Aetna Investment Management Inc. of Connecticut.

Analysts expect that buying to cushion the economic impact of an anticipated slowdown in domestic demand as consumers cut back on purchases of houses, cars and other big ticket items in response to higher interest rates.

But prospects for an economic soft landing could be upset if politicians go on tax-cutting binge without paying for it with reductions in government spending.

That would blast the budget deficit, fan inflation and sharply push up interest rates — a doomsday scenario that Lantoni's Jones said could trigger a recession.

US airline industry faces more rough going next year

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The US airline industry, dragged down by years of financial turmoil, is flying into 1995 with a set of old baggage and a few new problems.

The troubles could force one or more carriers into bankruptcy next year, while the survivors struggle to overcome tremendous financial hurdles made worse recently by a flood of safety concerns.

"The outlook is not as rosy as people were projecting," Leslie Hardin of BT Securities said of the industry's seemingly endless problems. "It just goes on and on."

Cut-throat competition and rampant fare discounting have slowed the pace of the airline industry's long-awaited recovery, despite aggressive cost-cutting programs.

US airlines, which lost \$12.7 billion between 1990 and 1993, may well lose money again in 1994, but are likely to post profits next year. Although carriers performed better than expected in the third quarter, earnings have been pressured by weak yields — a measure of revenue related to ticket prices.

"I feel comfortable that airlines will make money in 1995, but the magnitude of the profit levels will not be as big as one had hoped," said Paul Karos of CS First Boston.

Industry experts see little long-term traffic impact from a recent string of crashes that have caused passenger jitters and last week prompted Transportation Secretary Federico

Pens to order a special safety audit of all US airlines.

But the financial troubles are far from over. The specter of bankruptcy or liquidation could re-emerge next year, experts said. Ironically, the industry would likely stabilize if a carrier went out of business because of reduced competition and capacity, they said.

Following America West Airlines Inc.'s emergence from bankruptcy in August, airlines have been operating without any major company in Chapter 11 for the first time in five years.

"I think you have two or three carriers that are somewhat fragile," said Jon Ash, managing director at Global Aviation Associates Ltd in Washington.

The early months of 1995 will be especially critical for Trans World Airlines Inc. and USAir Group Inc., which are lagging far behind the rest of the industry.

TWA, which has remained troubled since it emerged from bankruptcy last year, is trying to persuade its bondholders to approve a restructuring plan aimed at slashing debt and setting a new course for the cash-strapped airline.

USAir, which has been under intense scrutiny following a fatal crash outside Pittsburgh in September and another in Charlotte, North Carolina, in July, desperately needs employee concessions in order to lower its costs.

"It's going to take a lot of change to make USAir viable," said George Pearson, president of TravelScan Corp., a Washington-based air transport consulting firm.

USAir, which has some of the industry's highest costs, has been pummeled by fierce competition from Continental Airlines Inc.'s "Continental Lite" no-frills, short-haul operation.

But the skies are still not clear for Continental, which has failed to make "Continental Lite" profitable and will ground planes in January to reduce excess capacity.

Industry majors American Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Air Lines Inc. will further refine their business next year in a pursuit of profits.

Analysts said American would continue its restructuring operations while seeking concessions from workers in an effort to reduce costs.

United, which underwent an employee buy-out earlier this year, is expected to keep close watch on its new West Coast no-frills shuttle and Delta will continue its aggressive cost-cutting plan unveiled this year.

Southwest Airlines Co., which this month stunned Wall Street with an unexpectedly weak fourth-quarter earnings outlook, is set to revamp its fare structure in an effort to boost depressed yields.

Dollar falls against yen

TOKYO — The US dollar was lower against the Japanese yen in slow Tokyo trading yesterday, while Tokyo share prices gained.

With foreign currency trading now continuing around the clock in Tokyo, the dollar was quoted at 100.38 yen at the former closing hour, down 0.13 yen from late Thursday but above 100.18 yen late Friday in New York.

The Tokyo foreign exchange market officially opened for 24-hour trading last Thursday. In practice, Tokyo-based currency traders already had been handling deals around the clock by swapping on overseas markets.

All financial markets were closed Friday in Japan for a national holiday. Activity was the slowest this year, largely because of the holiday season, traders said. The dollar ranged between 100.20 and 100.38 yen.

On the Tokyo Stock Exchange, the 225-stock Nikkei Stock Average gained 93.22 points, or 0.47 percent, closing at 19,726.75. On Thursday, the average had climbed 292.86 points, or 1.51 percent, to 19,633.53.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section gained 11.21 points, or 0.73 percent, to 1,556.23.

It had gained 23.01 points, or 1.51%, to 1,545.02 on Thursday.

Share prices advanced because of continued strength in futures prices, but market players said the Nikkei average would likely have trouble breaking 20,000.

Volume on the first section was some 280 million shares, down from 378.35 million Thursday. Advances led declines 843 to 210, while 147 issues were unchanged.

Market bellwether Nippon Telegraph and Telephone jumped 14,000 yen (\$139) to 878,000 yen (\$8,747) after the government's budget, announced Sunday, included 30 billion yen (\$299 million) in low-interest loans for an optical-fiber telecommunications network.

The price of the benchmark No. 164 10-year Japanese government bonds closed at 97.04 yen, up 0.06 yen from Thursday's close. Their yield fell to 4.555 percent from 4.565 percent. (AP, Reuters)

All indexes decrease

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

ANDRE LUMBROSO



Two-Sided Index Maof Index Karam Index

THE bears were back in force yesterday, as investors seemed to lose hope after a few days of rises.

The Two-Sided Index declined 2.2 percent, the Maof 2.1 percent and the Karam 2.4 percent. Total turnover was NIS 108 million, which was not much, with the Karam market contributing its usual NIS 32m.

The declines reflected two factors. First was redemptions of mutual fund certificates of about NIS 100m. There were reports that a large part of those sellers were non-profit organizations who were concerned about the tax implications of holding those mutual funds certificates after January 1.

There were probably more sellers who decided to get out while they can and wait to see how the market will react to the introduction of the new tax.

Second, the impending change in the composition of the Maof Index had a serious impact on trading.

Three new securities will join that index as of Sunday: Leumi and Hapoalim, with an 8.5 percent weight each, and Tadiran with a 3 percent weight. In other words, 22 percent of the Maof will change.

The Maof mutual funds are expected to maintain an index structure which parallels the Maof Index, particularly since this is their investment policy and they are accepted as collateral by the members of the exchange when writing options.

These mutual funds will, in all likelihood, have to sell the shares which are being dropped from the index — First International Bank 1, Delek and Property and Building, — and buy those three

securities. In addition, they will have to restructure the proportions of the various securities being held to maintain parallelism with the official Maof Index. Those mutual funds will have to do so as of January 1. Many investors wanted to be ready to do it before the mutual funds, so as not to suffer the likely price declines.

There was also continued concern about fundamentals, and particularly the level of interest rates.

Many saw no reason to rejoice in the Central Bank pronouncement that interest rates remain the same. They reason that the decision was made because the next index or two are likely to be low, and there are early reports that the total volume of credit, and particularly the volume of unlinked shekel credit, is beginning to decline.

Should that be true, this would mean that the economy is slowing down, (something that for the time being is not being supported by economic indicators), which is not good news for the market.

If it is not, then it means interest rates will rise next month.

Declines outnumbered rises on the Two-Sided market by a ratio of 17 to 1. Some of the popular shares posted sharp declines on insignificant turnovers. Cohen Development declined 5.7 percent on a turnover of NIS 48,000; T-Bone Veal closed 7.4 percent lower on a turnover of NIS 32,000.

Among the blue chips, Chemicals was the most traded security with a NIS 5.3m turnover and rose 0.4 percent (one of the few securities which did). Koor closed 3.5 percent lower, Clal Industries was down 2.3 percent and Clal Israel fell 3.5 percent.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

MARK	STERLING	YEN	SP	FF
STERLING	2.441/25	164.75/87	2.052/28	8.429/30
YEN	1.576/87	0.6483/66	1.3301/25	5.408/12
SP	1.184/57	0.4048/58	75.00/1N	4.087/41
FF	0.2894/99	0.1195/97	16.34/8N	0.2445/47

Prices from 20:20 local time

SOURCE:

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

THE PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO

Rovers stay top

LONDON (Reuters) - Blackburn Rovers stayed at the top of the Premier League last night with a 3-1 win over Manchester City.

Goals by Alan Shearer in the 9th, Mark Atkins in the 16th and Graeme Le Saux in the 67th kept Rovers ahead of Manchester United in the top spot by two points. Niall Quinn scored for hosts City in the 21st minute.

In other action, Manchester United won 3-2 at Chelsea. Scott Brown McClair killed off the London side seconds after it had pulled level in a spirited fightback.

Liverpool goalkeeper David James saved a penalty and pulled off a brilliant injury-time save to help the Merseysiders win 2-1 at Leicester who remain one from bottom.

England under-21 striker Robbie Fowler, with his 18th goal of the season, and Welsh veteran Ian Rush scored for Liverpool who climbed into fourth place on goal difference, above Nottingham Forest, which was held 0-0 at Coventry.

Leicester's Simon Grayson was sent off in the 82nd minute after a second yellow card offense.

Third-placed Newcastle was also held to a scoreless draw at Leeds, while troubled Arsenal drew 0-0 at home against relegation-threatened Aston Villa.

Villa's Ireland international Andy Townsend, back after a six-month suspension, was sent off on the hour for a second bookable offense.

Wimbledon's Andy Thorn suffered the same fate at Southampton but his side still won 3-2, with striker Dean Holdsworth scoring twice.

Manchester United, beaten both at home and away by Chelsea last season on its way to the league title before thrashing them 4-0 in the FA Cup final, went two up through Mark Hughes in the 21st minute and an Eric Cantona penalty seconds after the interval.

Then Chelsea proceeded to score as many goals as they had in their previous six matches.

Scott John Spencer pulled one back with a 58th-minute penalty and then Eddie Newton headed

the equalizer 13 minutes from time.

But from the restart McClair took a pass from Roy Keane to score the winner.

A superb 86th-minute save by goalkeeper Gary Walsh from Chelsea substitute Mark Stein ensured United took all three points.

Liverpool's James dived to his right to beat out Steve Thompson's 63rd-minute penalty and four minutes later, Fowler put them ahead with a hotly-disputed penalty after Mike Whitlow was adjudged to have pushed defender John Seales.

Leicester pulled one back three minutes from time through substitute Iwan Roberts's header, but Liverpool hung on for its first win in six league matches.

Nottingham Forest skipper Stuart Pearce missed a first-half penalty against Coventry.

Newcastle, which has won only one of its last nine matches, had appeals for a first-minute penalty turned down after striker Paul Kitson was upended by Leeds defender John Pemberton.

Arsenal was jeered off at the end of its latest dismal display, failing to get the better of 10-man Villa, although it was without suspended England striker Ian Wright.

Dane Claus Thomsen headed a late equalizer for bottom team Ipswich in a 1-1 draw away to West Ham.

PREMIER LEAGUE: Manchester City 1, Blackburn 3; Arsenal 0, Aston Villa 0; Chelsea 2, Manchester United 3; Coventry 0, Nottingham Forest 0; Crystal Palace 0, Queens Park Rangers 0; Everton 1, Sheffield Wednesday 4; Leeds 0, Newcastle 0; Leicester 1, Liverpool 2; Manchester City vs. Blackburn late game; Norwich 0, Tottenham 2; Southampton 2, Wimbledon 3; West Ham 1, Ipswich 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blackburn	20	14	4	2	44	18	46
Man Utd	20	14	2	4	38	18	44
Newcastle	20	11	6	3	36	22	39
Liverpool	20	10	6	4	36	19	36
Notts Forest	20	10	5	5	29	29	35
Leeds	20	9	6	5	29	32	32
Norwich	20	8	6	6	19	37	30
Tottenham	20	8	5	7	24	34	29
Manchester City	20	8	4	8	31	34	28
Chelsea	20	8	4	8	26	28	28
Arsenal	20	6	7	7	23	32	25
Coventry	20	6	7	7	20	39	25
Wimbledon	20	7	4	9	24	35	25
Sheff Wed	20	6	6	8	28	34	24
Southampton	20	6	5	9	29	33	23
Sheff Wed	20	6	5	9	29	33	23
QPR	20	5	7	8	16	20	22
Crystal Palace	20	5	7	8	16	20	22
West Ham	20	4	4	10	16	22	19
Everton	20	4	7	9	18	22	19
Aston Villa	20	3	8	9	22	31	17
Ipswich	20	3	3	12	20	35	14
Leicester	20	3	4	13	20	40	13

Israel receives second spot in UEFA Cup competition

ORI LEWIS

ISRAEL'S improved world soccer rating is beginning to pay off.

There will be two UEFA Cup spots for Israeli clubs in the upcoming competition.

The national team's 20th-place ranking permits two National League clubs a place in the UEFA Cup and will ensure that Israel has at least three clubs in European club competition next season.

One club will play in the Cup-Winners' Cup, although it is uncertain if Israel will gain a berth in the preliminary rounds of the Champions' League following Maccabi Haifa's, Maccabi Tel Aviv's and Hapoel Beersheba's poor performances in this year's club competitions.

If no Champions' League spot is available, the National League champions will play in the UEFA Cup, probably along with the winners of the Toto Cup.

Meanwhile, Maccabi Tel Aviv last night completed a deal to sell Alon Mizrahi back to Maccabi Haifa for \$250,000. But he will only be able to play for them next season.

Mizrahi will therefore make a "stopover" in Ashdod for the rest of the current season.

Mac TA, Hap Lod fight for tennis State Cup

HEATHER CHAIT

MACCABI Tel Aviv and Hapoel Lod do battle today at the Hadar Yosef courts in Tel Aviv to decide the winner of 1994's tennis State Cup.

The Maccabians, upstaged last year by Maccabi North Tel Aviv in the final, are chasing their 17th Cup title.

Offer Sela and Oren Motevassel make up the Tel Aviv team with Ohad Weinburg and Rob Simon playing for Lod.

The women's final will be a tussle between Hachameli Haifa with Hila Rosen and Shiri Burstein playing against Maccabi North Tel Aviv with Tzippi Obziller and Hagit Ohanian.

Rosen is the current Israeli women's champion with Burstein her runner-up.

Finals in other age groups took place at the weekend: Maccabi North Tel Aviv clinched this year's youth title by beating Ness Ziona with the junior's championship going to Afeka which beat Sporten Petach Tikva.

Titles in the masters event went to Shai Pony (35), Joe Oren (45) and Yaacov Koriath (60). Batseva Mandel triumphed in the women's section.

Bulls survive blunder, defeat Knicks in OT

CHICAGO (AP) - Scottie Pippen scored a season-high 36 points and the Chicago Bulls survived a last-second blunder in regulation by Steve Kerr on Sunday to beat the New York Knicks 107-104 in overtime.

In the only other scheduled game, Denver stopped Seattle 105-96.

In an intense Christmas matchup of bitter rivals, Pippen scored all seven of Chicago's overtime points. But the Bulls would have ended matters earlier if not for the closing sequence in regulation that gave the Knicks another life.

With Chicago ahead 100-97, New York's Anthony Mason threw a full-court inbound pass right to Chicago's Steve Kerr. But instead of catching the ball, Kerr batted it with both hands like a volleyball, apparently intent on killing the clock.

However, the ball went right to Hubert Davis, who made an off-

MELBOURNE (AP) - Leg-spinner Shane Warne took three wickets in the final session yesterday as Australia clawed its way back into contention on the second day of the second cricket Test against England at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Warne reduced England from 119-1 to 148-4 at stumps - 131 runs in arrears of the Australian first innings total. Graham Gooch was unbeaten on 15 at stumps, with night-watchman Darren Gough on one.

England lost opener Alec Stewart, who was forced to retire hurt when he suffered a broken right index finger after being struck by a Craig McDermott delivery.

England manager Keith Fletcher said X-rays had confirmed that the finger - the same one Stewart broke earlier in the tour - was broken after the opener was struck by a rising delivery immediately after lunch.

England lost only Graeme Hick in the second session before Warne's wizardry lifted the home team.

Hick, who replaced Stewart, was given out caught behind by Steve Rhodes off the bowling of McDermott for 23.

Captain Mike Atherton (44) was next to go after a labored innings, leg before wicket to Warne a long way forward. He was followed by Graham Thorpe, who played confidently for his 51 but was reluctant to leave the crease when given out caught by Mark Waugh off Warne.

Gooch and Mike Gatting looked to steady the innings but Gatting walked straight into Warne's trap, caught behind square by a diving Steve Waugh for nine as he found himself unable to resist the temptation to sweep.

Steve Waugh was earlier stranded six runs short of his



CAUGHT IN THE ACT - Craig McDermott is jubilant after having Graeme Hick (r) caught by Ian Healy for 23. (AP)

eighth Test century as Australia was dismissed for 279 in its first innings.

Waugh was unbeaten on 94 when Damien Fleming (16) was the last man out after the home

team resumed at 220 for seven wickets.

Waugh shared useful partnerships with tail-enders Tim May and Fleming of 22 and 37 respectively. He began the day on 61

but Australia made slow progress against some accurate bowling from Devon Malcolm, Phillip DeFreitas and Gough.

Gough made two crucial breakthroughs when he dismissed May (9) and McDermott (0) within the space of four balls during his 23rd over.

May walked across his stumps and was clearly leg before wicket, while McDermott was yorked for a duck as Gough bagged his fourth wicket of the innings.

Gough finished with figures of 4-60 from 26 overs.

The arrival of last man Fleming prompted Waugh to move up a gear. Fleming contributed a breezy 16 but their 10th-wicket partnership of 37 in half an hour was ended when Fleming edged a ball from Malcolm to Hick at slip.

Waugh was given a huge ovation as he left the field after a defiant innings that included five boundaries.

Australia first innings (overnight 220 for seven): M.Stewart run out 8; M.Taylor lbw DeFreitas 9; D.Boon c Hick b Tunnell 47; M.Waugh c Thorpe b DeFreitas 71; M.Evans c Atherton b Gough 34; S.Waugh not out 17; L.Healy c Rhodes b Tunnell 17; S.Waugh c Hick b Gough 9; T.May lbw Gough 6; C.McDermott b Gough 0; D.Fleming c Hick b Malcolm 16; Extras (lb-w nb-s) 10; Total 279.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-38, 3-91, 4-100, 5-171, 6-208, 7-220, 8-242, 9-242; Bowling: Malcolm 28.3-4-78-1 (nb-1), DeFreitas 23.4-66-2 (nb-1), Gough 26.5-60-4, Tunnell 26.7-59-2 (nb-1), Hick 2-0-0-0.

England first innings: M.Atherton lbw Warne 44; A.Stewart retired hurt 23; G.Thorpe c M.Waugh b Warne 51; G.Gooch not out 15; M.Gatting c S.Waugh b Warne 9; D.Gough not out 1; Extras (lb-w nb-s) 1; Total (for four wickets) 148.

Fall of wickets: 1-40, 2-119, 3-124, 4-140; To bat: S.Rhodes, P.DeFreitas, D.Malcolm, P.Tunnell.

Bowling: McDermott 16.4-43-1 (nb-2), Fleming 11.5-30-0, M.Waugh 3-1-11-4, Waugh 20-3-3-0, May 19-5-28-0. Stewart retired hurt with the score at 10 for no wicket in the seventh over.

Eurosport doesn't deliver the goods

SPORTSWATCH

ARYEH DEAN COHEN

ies on RTL or SAT, especially when performed to numbers like Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing."

The body-building was preceded by the World Aerobic Championships and followed by cut-rate professional wrestling from something called The World Superstars of Wrestling that featured low-rent hulk with unimaginative monikers like Rambo, a grappler dressed in combat fatigues. Sports Channel's WWF is much more fun.

Eurosport's promos are lousy, too: The ad for the motorcycling show spends as much time focusing on the pretty women at track-side as it does on the bikes. And if Eurosport is "purely sport," as it insists in its own promos, how do they explain the purely commercial competition in which viewers can win Timecop movie jackets and watches, not to mention the hours when the station is nothing but a slummed down Shopping Channel?

There was a time when Eurosport offered Monday Night Football, and reports of a deal with ESPN had us thinking optimistically we'd reap the benefits, but, sadly, this doesn't ap-

pear to be the case.

The station did a fine job with the Olympics and some other special events, but their regular programming is sadly lacking. Their lineup for Sunday, a prime sports-watching day, featured body-building, car racing, boxing, and that Grade D wrestling.

At about noon, Eurosport's signal flickered, then disappeared, to be replaced by a Golden Channels test pattern. To be honest, I wasn't sorry.

CHANNEL SURFING: The Major League Baseball strike had better get settled fast, or we could be in for more cut-rate baseball from Prime Sport. First it was Japanese baseball, which Prime has started showing again. Then it was the Arizona Fall League. Now we're about to get something called Pony League baseball (6 pm tonight; Taipei's 13-14 years old against Pennsylvania's). Are we really that desperate for baseball? Prime should bring back Baseball's Greatest Games and keep the pony in the barn.

Why does Channel One's *Mabou* Sunday night sports report totally ignore the fact that National Basketball League games are going on that night? C'mon fellas, just because you don't have the broadcast rights to them doesn't mean they don't exist!

Miami wins AFC East

Sanders fails in bid to reach 2,000 yards

MIAMI (AP) - The Miami Dolphins wrapped up Detroit's Barry Sanders and the AFC East title - and gave scooter-bound coach Don Shula another milestone victory.

Regular-season victory No. 319, surpassing the mark held by the late George Halas, was achieved as Dan Marino threw for 285 yards and Bernie Parmelee scored three touchdowns in a 27-20 victory over Detroit.

Miami held Sanders, the NFL's leading rusher, to 52 yards on 12 carries. Sanders needed 169 yards to become the third 2,000-yard rusher in NFL history. He finished the season with 1893 yards, failing to join OJ Simpson and Eric Dickerson in the grid pantheon.

Miami (10-6) shared first place in the AFC East with New England but got the division title by virtue of beating the Patriots twice during the season.

The win also gives the Dolphins momentum going into the playoffs. The Dolphins had lost four of six going into Sunday night.

The Dolphins teetered on blowing a 17-point first half lead until an interception of Dave Krieg's pass with 3:41 left.

With the win, Miami will play host to Kansas City at Joe Robbie Stadium in the first round of the playoffs next weekend.

The Lions (9-7), who had won four straight, missed a chance to win the NFC Central title. Detroit now must await the outcome of last night's game between Minnesota and San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Rich Kotite, whose Philadelphia Eagles lost their last seven games after starting out 7-2, was fired as coach yesterday. No replacement has yet been named.

AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*Miami	10	6	0	.625	361	312
*New England	10	6	0	.625	361	312
Philadelphia	9	7	0	.562	347	280
Buffalo	7	9	0	.438	340	320
NY Jets	6	10	0	.375	324	350

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*Pittsburgh	12	4	0	.750	345	324
*Cleveland	11	5	0	.688	340	324
Chicago	7	9	0	.438	326	328
Indianapolis	6	10	0	.375	324	328

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*San Diego	11	5	0	.688	331	325
*Kansas City	9	7	0	.562	318	326
LA Raiders	7	9	0	.438	326	326
Denver	7	9	0	.438	347	326
Seattle	6	10	0	.375	287	322

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*Dallas	12	4	0	.750	414	348
NY Giants	9	7	0	.562	376	306
Arizona	7	8	0	.469	326	327
Washington	5	10	0	.333	300	418

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*Minnesota	9	5	0	.643	326	300
*Green Bay	8	7	0	.538	326	327
*Detroit	7	9	0	.438	357	342
*Chicago	6	9	0	.400	323	307
Tampa Bay	6	10	0	.375	261	351

	W	L	T	Pct.	Pt.	Pt.
*San Francisco	13	2	0	.867	491	276
New Orleans	7	9	0	.438	348	307
Atlanta	7	9	0	.438	318	326
LA Rams	4	12	0	.250	286	387

*clinched division **clinched playoff spot

The Sports Pages are edited by Joe Hoffman

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SALES

Labor MKs blast Shohat for 'contemptuous' treatment

LABOR MKs yesterday erupted in fury over Finance Minister Avraham Shohat's "contemptuous" treatment, after he canceled a planned meeting with his faction at the last minute.

"This is ongoing contempt," said Avi Yehzekel, noting that repeated promises by Shohat to discuss desired changes in the budget with Labor MKs had been broken. "There's a rupture between the ministers and the faction."

MKs angrily rejected faction chairman Eli Dayan's attempt to calm them down by promising that Shohat would be available throughout the next two days to meet personally with any interested MK, as well as at a meeting of the entire coalition this afternoon.

"It is impossible to accept coalition discipline if the prime minister dictates to us 24 hours before [the vote]," said Yehzekel, threatening that Labor MKs would even vote for amendments proposed by the Likud, if Shohat did not begin talking them seriously.

"You don't want to talk to

EVELYN GORDON

me?" added Shlomo Buhbut furiously. "Fine. We'll meet at the buttons [of the electronic voting machine]."

"Tomorrow's [i.e. this afternoon's] meeting... won't allow us to express ourselves," chimed in Absorption Committee chairman Emanuel Zissman. "I call on all the MKs not to attend."

Shohat, Zissman charged angrily, offered Meretz NIS 70 million in increased funding for immigrant absorption last week, before the vote on his committee's bill to increase the absorption basket, but had ignored his own pleas to do the same for the previous 18 months.

"He's willing to make deals with Meretz, but not with us?" he demanded.

"You have to understand the feelings of the people sitting here," added Dalia Itzik to Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish, who was representing the government. "There are those who say we must ask [Histadrut Chairman] Haim Ramon to re-

turn to the party. I think we need to call on [Foreign Minister] Shimon Peres... [and Prime Minister] Yitzhak Rabin to return to the party - they've forgotten that they're part of the party."

The ministers, she said, decide on everything after consulting with a few "in" MKs such as Finance Committee chairman Gedalya Gal, and ignore the rest.

Harish reacted angrily to the uproar.

"There's a dangerous dynamic [here]," he said, "with everyone beginning to threaten."

If any of these threats to expand the budget are carried out, he warned, the government would withdraw the budget before its final reading.

Gal - the only MK at the meeting to support Harish - said that he also would withdraw the budget bill if any costly amendments are passed.

"There are threats on the budget from every possible direction," he said. "But if there is a breach [of the proposed 1995 budgetary limits]... I will withdraw the budget and not bring it to a third reading."

Government to start paying city taxes

THE government will for the first time in years have to pay municipal rates (*armona*) on its property - but still not at the full rate, the Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday in a surprise move during its work on the Economic Arrangements Law.

The government had requested another year's *armona* exemption as part of the annual Arrangements Law, which accompanies the budget.

"[But] the Knesset Finance Committee was not happy with the fact that every year the Knes-

EVELYN GORDON

set is asked to extend [the exemption]," said committee chairman Gedalya Gal (Labor), presenting the bill to the plenum for its second and third reading.

However, he added, the committee also did not want to create too big a shock to the government's budget. It therefore decided that in 1995, the government will pay only 10% of the assessed *armona* for Defense Ministry and IDF property, 25% for hospitals and clinics, and 35% for other property.

The hope, he said, is that these percentages will be gradually increased in the following years, so that the government is paying full *armona* in another three years.

In another mini-rebellion, the committee added a section to the bill extending the exemption from the land improvement tax for those who sell a residential apartment until June 30, in an effort to increase the supply of apartments on the market and thereby to lower prices. By this date, the government has promised to present a bill on the subject, Gal said.

Yi'ud clears final legal hurdle to coalition

THE last legal barrier to Yi'ud's entrance into the government was crossed yesterday, when a petition to the High Court of Justice against the move was withdrawn in the face of the court's clear intention of rejecting it.

The petition, filed by the head of Tsomet's Rishon Lezion branch, Moshe Yemin, charged that Yi'ud MKs Gonen Segev and Alex Goldfarb would be violating a pre-election contract they had signed with Tsomet by joining the government. In this contract, they had promised to faithfully represent Tsomet and to work for the implementation of the ideas detailed in its platform.

However, Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Yitzhak Zamir, and Dalia Dornier said the petition failed to meet the minimal requirements for consideration by the court on several counts.

First, they said, if the document in question was really a contract

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between Tsomet and its MKs, then Tsomet was the only one damaged by its alleged violation, and therefore only Tsomet had the right to file a petition on the issue. Yemin's lawyer, Yeshayahu Avraham, said that Tsomet supported the petition, but had not wanted to join it for fear that it would be rejected. However, the justices did not accept this.

"What is clear is that Tsomet knowingly refrained from joining the petition," Zamir said. "What follows from this is that you're trying to force something it doesn't want onto Tsomet."

In any case, however, it is not clear that this contract would be enforceable, the justices said. "It's permitted to leave one's party," said Goldberg. "And that's what was done."

Finally, Goldberg noted, even if the court declared that Segev

and Goldfarb had violated the contract, this would not prevent them from joining the government.

"This court doesn't decide what is nice and what isn't. It rules on the legal situation," he said.

Yemin therefore agreed to withdraw the petition, but the justices nevertheless fined him NIS 4,000 in court costs.

Dan Zenberg adds: Likud MK Limor Livnat yesterday asked Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair to reconsider his decision not to block the appointment of Segev. Ben-Yair decided to drop proceedings on an earlier complaint by Livnat regarding the ties between Segev and Hamat Gader, for which he served as a consultant.

Livnat said she presented Ben-Yair with new information and asked him to look into the allegations urgently.

Shas demands cutting off funding for Na'amat

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

HISTADRUT Shas executive member Yehuda Avitan is demanding that the labor organization stop funding Na'amat because of its political activities to promote women.

MK Anat Maor, of Meretz, yesterday reacted angrily to Avitan's demand, saying Shas had adopted Meretz's Histadrut platform as part of Ram. "Consequently, Shas is bound by this platform, which includes promoting women's issues and financing them. Despite its attempts, Shas will never succeed in curbing Na'amat's activities."

Avitan's statement followed a petition by Na'amat to the High Court of Justice concerning the Jerusalem Municipality's refusal to appoint two Orthodox women to the city's religious council. He argued that the Histadrut executive session that Na'amat's move was political and the Histadrut should not finance it. But Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon supported Na'amat's right to promote the status of women and said he saw no reason to intervene.

Na'amat Chairperson Ofra Friedman said Na'amat is a political-social movement by definition and its goals are to promote women's issues by political as well as other means. She noted that a few years ago Na'amat won its petition to the High Court concerning the appointment of Lea Shaked to Yeroham's religious council.



Residents of Ramat Gan's Safari Park enjoy a sunny winter's day yesterday.

(Off. Yohanan/PPA)

'Davar' saved as Histadrut continues funding

THE expected closure of *Davar* this week was averted Sunday when the Histadrut executive decided to continue funding the newspaper until the conclusion of negotiations for its sale to French millionaire Jean Friedman.

Histadrut Chairman Haim Ramon had been determined to close *Davar* on December 31 by cutting off all funds. However, Friedman demanded that he be handed over an operating newspaper as a condition for continuing the negotiations with the Histadrut, which began last week. Ramon backed down and agreed.

Histadrut Treasurer MK Haim Oron said the Histadrut would transfer to *Davar* some

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

NIS 3 million a year for the next three or four years to help the newspaper get back on its feet under the new owners, which will include the journalists.

Oron said that as of January 1 the Histadrut will end its ownership of *Davar*, but that does not mean the newspaper will stop appearing if by then it does not have new owners.

According to the deal being worked out with Friedman, at least 20 percent of the newspaper will be owned by the journalists. The new paper will continue to employ some 50 of *Davar*'s 70 veteran journalists and 20

administrative workers, or about half of the newspaper's existing staff.

Friedman, who plans to model the new *Davar* on French newspapers such as *Le Monde* and *Liberation*, was initially also interested in buying Hakibbutz Ha'artzi's *Al Hamishmar* and merging the two newspapers. However, the merger idea, which had been promoted by Oron, appears improbable now, after Hakibbutz Ha'artzi's decision Sunday night to sell the controlling interest of *Al Hamishmar* to businessman Yitzhak Tshuva for \$11.4 million.

Tshuva will also get *Al Hamishmar*'s building and press in Tel Aviv, off Rehov Hamasger.

IDF unveils code of ethics

ALON PINKAS

THE army yesterday unveiled what it described as its 11 commandments of military ethics, norms, and values. They are contained in a document called "IDF Spirit - Values and Basic Rules."

The document, reflecting three years of work, was presented by OC Manpower Branch Maj.-Gen. Yoram Yair and philosophy professor Asa Kasher, who was asked to formulate the document. It defined itself as "the norms and values ID card of the IDF as a body, underlining the basis of every activity of its soldiers."

"IDF Spirit" aspires to codify the ethics underpinning the IDF and the moral tenets to which it adheres, but also details codes of behavior. "However, it is not a legal document and it does not replace army and General Staff orders, nor those given by superior officers in the chain of command," Yair said.

"The IDF is different from other armies and unique among them because of several things: one being the high turnover of manpower every three months," Kasher said. "The document's existence creates an obligation to adhere to it, comply by the principles expressed in it, and generates motivation to act in its spirit."

The 10-page document is divided into three parts. The preamble is a descriptive characterization of the "IDF Spirit." The second part contains 11 core "values" - operation persistence, responsibility, reliability, personal example, human life, purity of arms, professionalism, discipline, loyalty, representation, and camaraderie.

The third section deals with "basic rules" of behavior for officers and enlisted men. It elaborates on values, behavior during military service, behavior in the face of the enemy (adherence to international war codes and law), behavior toward civilian organizations, and the code of behavior for reservists and retired soldiers.

Neither Yair nor Kasher overestimated the practical value of the "IDF Spirit," preferring to highlight its cultural and educational value.

"It expresses exactly what we have based our entire military legacy on, but it needs to be repeated and clarified for inquisitive young people joining the army," said Yair.

The charge sheet filed by the Central Command prosecutor, Lt. Ya'acov Algrably and Pvt. Tzahi Shilton concerning the death while attempting to extricate a patrol vehicle near the Lebanese border.

Algrably ordered Shilton to drive an armored personnel carrier and tow the stuck vehicle out of the mud. Berg was waiting between the two vehicles to connect the towing cable.

Shilton, driving with his viewing flap closed, could not see Berg, and ran into him, killing him.

The charge sheet states that Algrably knew Shilton was neither qualified nor authorized to perform such tasks.

Officer, soldier accused of negligence in fatal accident

ALON PINKAS

AN IDF officer and a soldier were yesterday charged with negligence leading to the death of Pvt. Eran Berg in an accident last February 22.

According to the charge sheet filed by the Central Command prosecutor, Lt. Ya'acov Algrably and Pvt. Tzahi Shilton concerning the death while attempting to extricate a patrol vehicle near the Lebanese border.

Algrably ordered Shilton to drive an armored personnel carrier and tow the stuck vehicle out of the mud. Berg was waiting between the two vehicles to connect the towing cable.

Shilton, driving with his viewing flap closed, could not see Berg, and ran into him, killing him.

The charge sheet states that Algrably knew Shilton was neither qualified nor authorized to perform such tasks.

The demonstrators - from the Beit She'an Valley moshavim Yardena, Beit Yosef, Rehov, Sde Tekuma, and Revava - say the importation of onions has drastically lowered the wholesale price. They claim it costs them NIS 1.50 to grow a kilo of onions, while they cannot get more than NIS 0.50 a kilo in the wholesale market after expenses. The growers are demanding a guaranteed price of NIS 2.00 a kilo.

Agriculture Ministry spokesman Ronni Hassid said it had been decided to import onions after the wholesale market price had reached NIS 3.00 a kilo and the price to consumers had reached up to NIS 5.00. He said the recent import of 1,000 kilos of onions from Turkey would be a one-time measure - unless prices go up.

NRP: We won't let Supreme Court rule on constitutionality

DAN ZENBERG

THE NRP Knesset faction announced yesterday that it opposes turning the Supreme Court into a constitutional court because it is not representative of the diversity of points of view within society.

The Knesset Law Committee is currently conducting a series of discussions on Knesset-Supreme Court relations, with the intention of formulating a decision on the matter.

The issue has become important following the passage in 1992 of two human rights bills having the status of basic laws. The basic laws grant the court the right to disqualify regular Knesset legislation if it decides it contradicts the basic laws.

According to the current situation, any court can disqualify

legislation. The Law Committee is considering whether to limit that right to the Supreme Court. Likud MK Dan Meridor has submitted a bill calling for nine justices to sit as a constitutional court as a temporary measure.

The NRP resolution came a day after the High Court of Justice overruled the Chief Rabbi's denial of a kashrut certificate to Meatreal Ltd. because it also imports non-kosher meat.

MK Yitzhak Levy said the court had demonstrated "incredible insensitivity and lack of feeling. If it continues along this path, it will lose public confidence and could create a wide split in the nation... Kashrut is a technical matter and none of the justices has studied the laws of kashrut and non-kashrut."

Police skeptical of alleged plot to kidnap child from WIZO nursery

RAINE MARCUS

RUMORS that the Russian mafia plan to kidnap a child of wealthy parents in Ramat Aviv are probably unfounded, police sources said yesterday.

A security guard at the WIZO nursery school, which houses 120 children from three months to four years, told the parents' committee that he had been approached by Russian-

speaking men who asked him which children were worth kidnapping.

The guard, Issak Haimashvili, was questioned several times by police, who said they could find no evidence that he was really approached.

Even so, police have decided to beef up their patrols in the area.

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